

The Battalion

Getting airsick

American Airlines pilot's sickout caused more headaches, upset stomachs for passengers



MARK PASSWATERS

Over the President's Day weekend, thousands of people were stranded in airports around the nation because the pilots of American Airlines decided that they were too sick to fly.

Studies of this highly contagious illness, now being referred to as "the stupids," shows that it last approximately five days and does more damage to innocent people than intended targets (in this case, the management of the airline). It also seems to be somewhat immune to the judgements of Federal Courts.

The people who got stuck in these airports suffered a lot more than those pilots with this mysterious illness. The pilots and their union got a great deal of media attention during this event. In the interests of equal time, this space is donated to the people who were stranded so they can have their say:

"Dear American Airlines pilots, We are thrilled that you are all over your illnesses. We thought about you often while we were stuck in exotic locales like Dallas-Fort Worth, Boston, and Nashville. You see, we could not do anything else.

We are very proud of your show of unity with your brothers at Reno Air. It is horrible that these poor pilots, at a small airline that American just bought, make a piddling \$75,000 a year. You noble pilots, who make between \$120,000 and \$200,000 a year, are so courageous in taking a stand.

We will make donations to the "Feed Reno Air" fund with money from our paychecks, right after we get done doing things like scraping gum off of park

benches and teaching learning disabled high school students.

It is usually very commendable to take up the cause of people that are less fortunate. However, going on an illegal strike to support people who make twice the salary of the average American citizen does not cultivate goodwill, especially when the pay increases will be coming anyway. When the pilots of Reno Air have not even acted on their own behalf, the "sick-out" looks flat out dumb.

There is no question that all pilots must be very intelligent people, especially when it comes to math and science.

However, it appears that these pilots neglected to take some courses in economics, government and psychology. Had you done so, they would have taught you that a business cannot simply double the salaries of hundreds of people at the snap of a finger; there is no space in a budget to do that.

The management of American Airlines is implementing the pay increases in two stages because it cannot afford to do otherwise. If the company goes broke, you do not get paid either.

Pretending to be sick and not going to work when you have a binding contract

in effect normally does not make people sympathize with your stance. Leaving people stranded for days on end also does not help. In fact, it usually increases their vocabulary, as they learn new words like Delta, Continental and United. In case you did not know, these are very naughty words. They can make you lose your job if enough people use them.

Not only is the public upset with you, but the other employees of American are, too. When the pilots got "sick," the baggage handlers, ticket agents and flight attendants could not work. That means that they did not get paid. Usually, lack

of money makes people hostile. If anyone in the union had taken a government class, you also would have recognized that when a Federal Court orders someone to return to work, they do so. The fact that the heads of your union ignored this order makes all of you, even the ones who did come to work, look arrogant. It gives the appearance that the pilots are out of touch — perhaps 35,000 feet out of touch — with reality.

Reality paints the picture that you, the pilots of a major airline, do not care about the people who keep you in business. Your attempt to force things out of your employer by holding the customers for ransom was counterproductive.

In fact, many people who have suffered through this will probably never fly with American Airlines again. This may hurt the company, but in the end, the pain will trickle down to you, the employee.

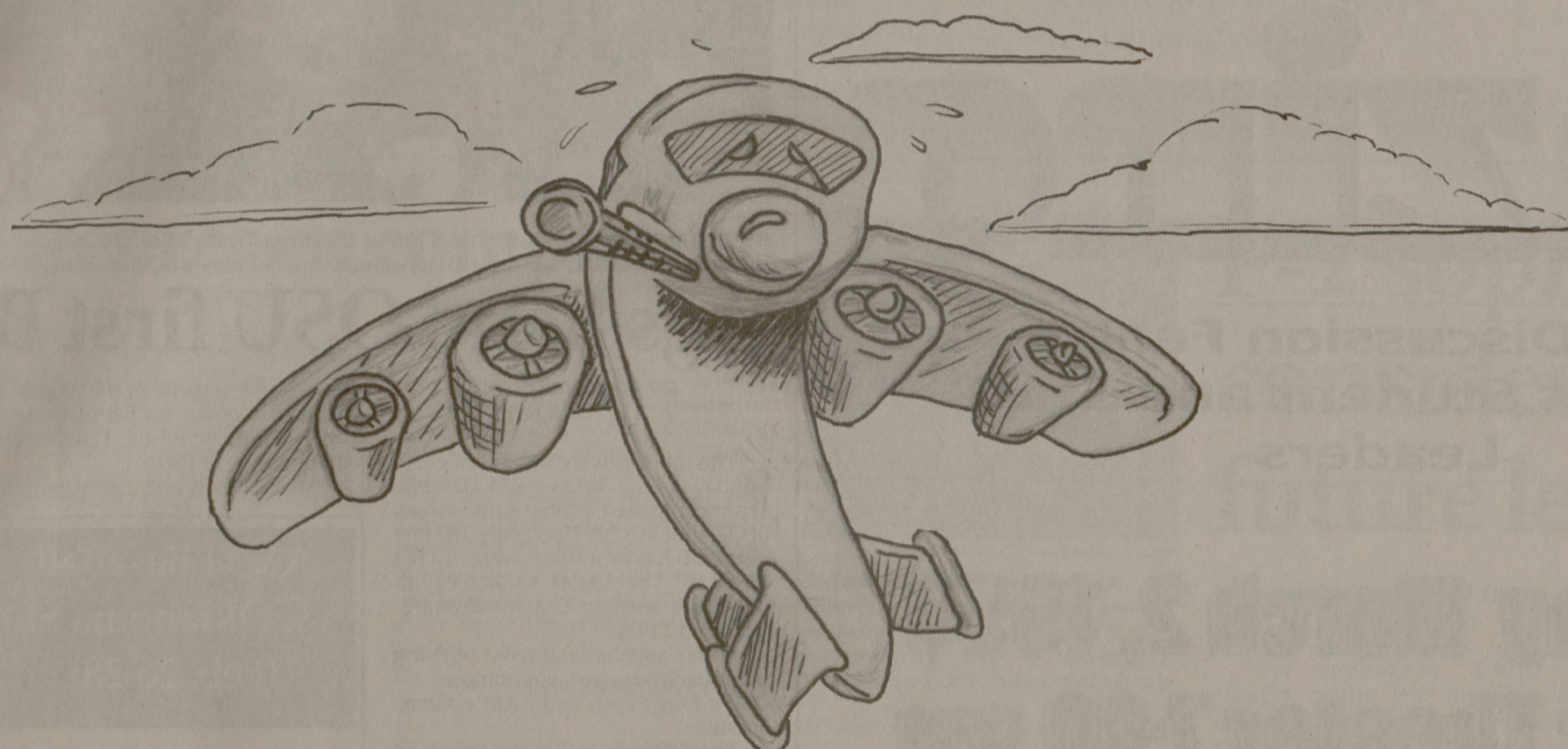
This stunt must have been pulled without thinking about the consequences, much like a person who burns down their own house during a riot.

It might be a good idea to choose your battles more wisely. Picking this fight was a bad move; the pilots ended up looking like spoiled rich brats with no respect for the law or the people that you are supposed to serve.

The damage has been done. The public opinion of American Airlines pilots has dropped faster than Bill Clinton's pants in a bordello. But, do not stay up at night worrying if you will ever see us again. You certainly will — as we board other airlines whose pilots honor their commitments.

Sincerely Yours,
The Stranded Passengers of American Airlines

Mark Passwaters is an electrical engineering graduate student.



MICHAEL WAGENER/THE BATTALION

Movie based on Clinton trial would flop at theater box office

(U-WIRE) NEW YORK, N.Y.

The situation in government currently resembles the plot of a movie thrown together to garner last-minute box office ticket sales. The following is a hypothetical film review intended to identify the absurdity of the present political situation:

Scandal, is a film by DreamWorks SKG, set for release on July 22, 2002. The film is rated R for language, graphic sexual descriptions and activity, and violently reckless behavior.

The first impression that confronts a viewer of *Scandal* is the tremendous decline that the studio has undergone since sweeping the Academy Awards three years ago with *Saving Private Ryan*.

The contrast could not be more profound. Whereas *Ryan* represented all that is best in America, *Scandal* makes every effort to exploit the flagrant wrongs in the current political system.

It is the first major release since former President Bill Clinton joined DreamWorks' board of directors after a lucrative offer from his monetary and moral allies within the studio.

The move, of course, was prompted less by a devout interest in the art of film than by the financial necessity that arose after his bitter separation from Sen. Hillary Rodham, D-N.Y.

The film, directed by Steven Spielberg, tells a sordid and twisted story of a governmental scandal that shakes Washington to its very foundations. While far too complex for any reasonable script, the basic plot can be summed up as *Sex, Lies and Audiotape*.

The film opens with a young White House intern, played by Michelle Williams of the canceled "Dawson's Creek" saga, confessing to kinky sexual escapades with the President of the United States (John Travolta, in his second presiden-

tial role) to a back-stabbing Pentagon bureaucrat (Barbara Streisand).

Before long, a special prosecutor, played with particular levity by Dan Ackroyd, becomes involved and indicts the president on numerous illegalities, leading to an impeachment in the House of Representatives.

The rest of the film is consumed with banter during a Senate trial, until a quasi-dramatic climax arrives with each member standing to announce his vote.

The film ends with an investigation into the investigator, and the only survivor is the President who began the drama. He vows revenge on his "oppressors," but the only people who are truly oppressed are the viewers of this sad excuse for summer entertainment.

By the time the credits roll, one is left debating whether to try to understand this sordid mess or just relegate it to the fictitiously impossible.

DreamWorks is not known for such exploitative, merely money-seeking summer projects, but *Scandal* certainly fits the bill.

A major suspension of disbelief is required throughout the film as a House Speaker and Speaker-to-be resign, and the public continues unwaveringly to support the President in a one-dimensional farce.

The movie desperately lacks a central theme. Focus remains on all of the extraneous events, including flagrant plagiarism from *Wag the Dog* in a bombing scene that pretends to pass for legitimate military activity on the eve of the impeachment vote.

The heavy borrowing from outside sources is only further evidence of the impossibility that such a twisted and complicated drama could have been a natural development of directorial genius. Overall, the film seems to be the mere

product of some tabloidish fantasy that could hardly pass for a column in a college newspaper and never expands from its sex-crazed base.

Beyond this lack of credibility, however, one may take issue with its sensational nature. The chief executive is seen as an adolescent who partakes behavior that cannot even be printed in this review.

One soon finds that the vast majority of Congressmen in the film are indeed no better, albeit without having broken any laws in the process.

It would not at all be surprising if Jerry Springer had directed the film instead of Spielberg. Certainly the sexual free-for-all on which the film thrives is much more to Springer's tastes.

While merely a forgettable summer flick, *Scandal* demonstrates how easily the foundations upon which America is built can be undermined with almost every branch of government being scarred by the unfolding events.

One sees a cheapening of politics into a boyish playground; the plot is not centered on the actual guilt of the President, but on the ruckus that emerges. It reads more like a "How Not to Act in Politics" manual than a plausible motion picture.

In all, *Scandal* provides mindless entertainment for the type of people who thrive on borderline news stories to occupy the drab political scene that has settled in since the election of President Gore.

The single redeeming quality one may strain to find in *Scandal* is the gratifying appreciation that the plot ends with the reel of film, and that such a crisis is not one through which our nation actually has to suffer. This film receives no stars.

Brian Graebe is a columnist for the New York University's Washington Square News.

MIKE LUKOVICH ATLANTA CONSTITUTION 099



THE OLYMPIC TORCH

MAIL CALL

Film festival photo in Battalion tasteless

The picture promoting the Texas Film Festival is particularly malicious and obnoxious. All students and faculty of Texas A&M should feel insulted and offended by such trash. It is obvious that there is a lack of decency in today's society and *The Battalion* is an integral part of such deviancy.

A picture of a young woman smoking a cigarette while sitting on the toilet (with her legs wide open) is vulgar enough. Then, she even has her middle finger extended to the camera!

Lewd and lascivious gestures are not funny or witty. They are simply a sad attempt to attract attention. Well, they have caught our attention and our congregation will physically protest the illicit coverage of the liberal *Battalion* and the

liberal film festival. God's judgement will surely be upon you. *The Battalion* is a stench in the nostrils of God.

Dave McManus
Pastor, Faith Almighty Mission
Crusade Outreach Ministries
Accompanied by 3 signatures

The full page picture of the young lady advertising the Texas Film Festival in the Feb. 24 issue of *The Battalion* has gone a long way to totally denigrate what a major university newspaper should represent, especially this honored University publication. One might expect such a photo in some redneck beer joint, but certainly not in this newspaper.

What is the point of showing a young lady sitting on a commode, smoking a cigarette and displaying a sophomoric and vulgar sign with her finger? There are more educated ways for getting across the idea

of a "flick." We would not have expected this crudeness even the t.u. *Daily Texan*.

Larry D. Claborn
Class of '59
Accompanied by 4 signatures

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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