

Wednesday, April 12, 2000

"Here comes Peter Cottontail"



Aggie mom Karen Barnes shops at a boutique featuring an Easter display with stuffed rabbits at the Blue Bonnet Festival on Saturday, April 8 in Chappell Hill.

MELISSA BARNES/SPECIAL TO THE BATTALION

Tests clear man of rape, implicate brother

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — When Clyde and Marlo Charles left a house 19 years ago, they said they hitchhiked in different directions down a road in the heart of south Louisiana's bayou country.

Their lives — like their paths — went in opposite directions that night.

Clyde Charles was accused of raping a nurse whose car had broken down a short distance away. He was convicted and spent most of the next two decades in prison. Marlo Charles was not charged in the crime.

Clyde Charles consistently protested his innocence and pushed for DNA testing once the technology became available. He got help from New York-based lawyers and PBS' "Frontline" investigative TV series.

In December, Clyde, now 47, was released from the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola after DNA tests showed he could not have committed the crime.

Less than four months later, the brothers' paths have crossed again: Authorities say the same DNA tests that Clyde Charles had requested have now implicated Marlo.

And on Monday, three days after Marlo Charles' arrest in Virginia for the rape, the sheriff of Terrebonne

Parish accused Clyde Charles of knowing his brother committed the crime.

Clyde Charles "may be innocent of the rape, but I feel he knew about his brother raping that woman," said

"There's no way in the world he was covering up for his brother. You don't go about saying your brother did it if you can't prove it."

— Barry Scheck
defense attorney

Former O.J. Simpson defense attorney Barry Scheck, whose New York-based Innocence Project at Cardozo Law School helped free Clyde Charles, ridiculed Larper's claim.

"There's no way in the world he was covering up for his brother," Scheck said in a telephone interview. "You don't go about saying your brother did it if you can't prove it."

Larper said there is enough evidence to have Clyde Charles booked with obstruction of justice, but added that it might not be productive to pursue a charge on a crime carrying a six-month maximum jail sentence.

"Clyde has served his time," he said. "Clyde Charles was age 28 when he was sentenced to life in prison for raping a woman near a house where the Charles brothers had been drinking in Houma, La., about 40 miles southwest of New Orleans."

A flat tire had stranded the 26-year nurse nearby, and she said a man came up behind her, punched her in the face and raped her. A deputy who found her lying on the ground had seen Clyde Charles about a mile away. The nurse identified him as her attacker.

Doctors admit to falsifying insurance

CHICAGO (AP) — More than a third of doctors surveyed nationwide admit deceiving insurance companies to help patients get the care they need.

Their tactics include: exaggerating the severity of an illness to help patients avoid being sent home early from the hospital; listing an inaccurate diagnosis on bills; and reporting nonexistent symptoms to secure insurance coverage.

In a random mailed survey of 720 doctors nationwide in 1998, 39 percent said they had used at least one of those tactics "sometimes" or more often within the preceding year.

The results were published in Wednesday's Journal of the American Medical Association.

Thirty-seven percent said their patients "sometimes" or more often asked them to deceive insurers. More than a quarter — 28.5 percent — said it is necessary to "game" the system to provide high-quality care.

Of the doctors who reported using deceitful practices, 54 percent said they did so more often than in the past.

"As pressures to control health care costs increase, it is likely that manipu-

lating reimbursement systems will increase," wrote the researchers, led by Dr. Matthew K. Wynia of the AMA's Institute for Ethics in Chicago.

"Health plans in which the use of these tactics is common should carefully review their rules and procedures and work with physicians to reduce the perceived need for covert advocacy."

Dr. Charles M. Cutler, chief medical officer for the American Association of Health Plans, which represents more than 1,000 HMOs and other insurance plans, said doctors who deceive insurers are "essentially allowing people to get benefits for which they haven't paid."

"The people who pay for that are everybody else who's paying for the premiums," Cutler said. He said the practice will ultimately backfire and cause costs to rise.

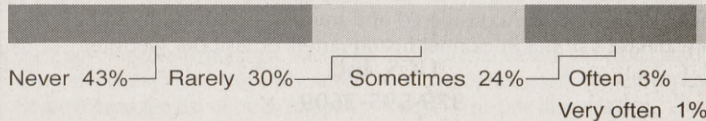
A smaller survey published in the AMA's Archives of Internal Medicine last year found that more than half of doctors approved the use of deceitful practices with insurance companies. The authors of the latest survey said theirs is the first to report what doctors are actually doing.

Physicians' falsehoods

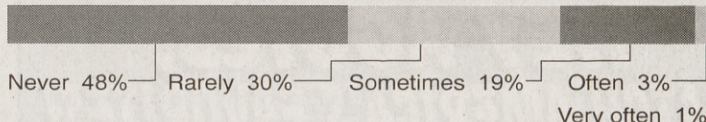
Responding to pressures in the health care system, some doctors who answered a 1998 nationwide survey admitted to deceiving insurance companies to get proper care for their patients.

How frequently, if ever, in the last year have you had to ...

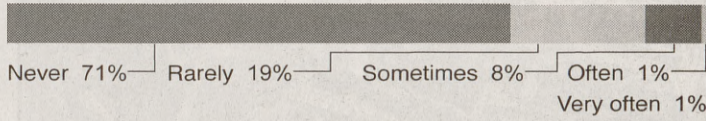
... exaggerate the severity of a patient's condition to help them avoid an early discharge from the hospital?



... change a patient's official (billing) diagnosis to help them secure coverage for a needed treatment or service?



... report signs or symptoms that a patient did not actually have to help the patient secure coverage for a needed treatment or service?



Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.
Source: Journal of the American Medical Association

News in Brief

Illegal immigrants found in container

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Fifteen illegal immigrants from China have been detained after authorities found them crammed in a filthy cargo container unloaded from a ship arriving from Hong Kong.

The group taken into custody Monday morning was inside a container unloaded in Los Angeles Harbor from the ship dubbed President Adams, said Virginia Kice, spokesperson for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

INS officers had to put on hazardous materials gear before entering the container.

Smugglers rigged the 10-by-30-foot metal container with escape hatches and an elaborate ventilation system using fans and car batteries for the two-week trip across the Pacific Ocean.

The container was supposed to contain toys, said John Pachter, spokesperson for American President Lines.

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STAFF APPLICATION

If you are interested in designing pages, writing stories, or taking pictures for the 2001 Texas A&M yearbook... then simply fill out this form and drop it off in room 004 (basement) of the Reed McDonald Building.

Available

Positions Include

(Check all desired positions)

- Managing Editor
- Section Editor(s)
- Copy Editor
- Photo Editor
- Web Editor
- Designer(s)
- Writer(s)
- Photographer(s)

Name: _____

Classification: _____

Major: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

E-mail: _____

Editor Positions

- 1) Why do you want an editor position?
- 2) What changes would you like to make to the yearbook?
- 3) What experience do you have in leadership roles?

Staff Positions

- 1) Why do you want to be on the staff?
- 2) What prior experience do you have that relates to the position you are applying for?

Please read and type your responses to the following questions on a separate sheet of paper that is to be turned in with this form. Also, attach any samples of work that you have along with a résumé, if possible. All applicants are encouraged to include any other relevant information.

DEADLINE FOR ALL APPLICATIONS IS THURSDAY, APRIL 20

If you have any questions, call Jon Niven at (979) 845-2681

THE BATTALION

SUMMER & FALL '00 STAFF APPLICATION

If you can write, edit, design pages, draw, use a camera... Texas A&M's award-winning student newspaper is looking for you.

Name: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

E-mail: _____

Major: _____

Classification: _____

Number of hours you will take in the summer or fall: _____

Expected graduation (semester): _____

If you have another job, what is it: _____

How many hours per week? _____

Do you plan to keep it, if hired? _____

Managing, Section, & Asst. Editor Applicants*

- 1) What are your goals for managing your staff?
- 2) What do you believe is the role of *The Battalion*?
- 3) What changes would you make to improve *The Battalion*? Pay particular attention to the position for which you're applying.

Staff Applicants*

- 1) Why do you want to work at *The Battalion*, and what do you hope to accomplish?
- 2) What experience do you have that relates to the position for which you are applying? (include classes, seminars, etc.)
- 3) What changes do you feel would improve the quality of *The Battalion*? (Give special attention to the section for which you're applying.)

*Please type your responses on a separate piece of paper, and attach a résumé and samples of your work (stories you have written for publications or classes, pages you have designed, photos taken, drawings made or other creative samples — just show us what you can do.

*Deadlines: **Wednesday, April 12**, for editor positions, and **Monday, April 17**, for staff positions. Turn applications in at 013 (basement) Reed McDonald Building.

OPENINGS INCLUDE:

Please check the semester and position(s) for which you are interested. If you are interested in more than one position, number them in order of preference with 1 being your top choice.

- Summer Fall
- Managing Editor**

Section Editors

- Campus
- Community
- Lifestyles and Entertainment
- Opinion
- Science & Technology
- Sports
- Night News
- Copy Chief
- Graphics
- Photo
- Radio News
- Web News

Assistant Editors

- Opinion
- Photo
- Radio
- Sports Editor
- Web News

Staff

- News Reporter
- Science & Technology Reporter
- Feature Writer
- Entertainment Writer
- Sports Writer
- Columnist
- Web Designer
- Radio Reporter
- Photographer
- Graphic Artist
- Cartoonist
- Page Designer
- Copy Editor