

Carruth offered plea bargain
for murder

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Prosecutors have offered plea bargains to three co-defendants in the shooting death of a friend, *The Charlotte Observer* Sunday.

Prosecutors have decided to go for the chance to plead guilty to a first-degree murder and avoid a murder trial, sources told.

With 26, and the other men with first-degree murder.

In the shooting of Charles Adams, 24, was pregnant with a baby when she was gunned while driving in southeast Charlotte. Adams was delivered by a Caesarean section. The prosecutors nor defense would comment on reports. Documents in the case confirm that prosecutors letters to all four defendants.

pleas. Carruth's lawyer, David Rudolph, said he isn't interested in pleading.

not going to comment on communications from the DA's office. "I can say Carruth is not interested in anything other than a trial to clear his name."

acted by The Associated Press. Carruth's lawyer, David Rudolph, said he isn't interested in pleading.

has been jailed since Monday.

'I am not interested in anything other than a trial to clear his name.'

— David Rudolph, Carruth's attorney

Rudolph wants Carruth tried at the end of the year.

With Van Brett Watkins, Eugene Kennedy, 24, and Drew "Boss" Abraham, would face life in prison or a fine if convicted of first-degree murder.

Four men also are each charged with conspiring to commit murder into an occupied vehicle and gun to try to kill Adams' wife.

plea offers call for different punishments based on the defendant's role in the slaying and records. Carruth could face 30 years in prison, according to newspaper sources.

th and Watkins, alleged accomplices as the triggermen, plead guilty for their respective roles.

for them to plead guilty to a first-degree murder and conspiracy to murder and serve eight to 30 years in prison.

eddy would also have to testify in the trial and the other defendants offer calls for him to be sentenced to second-degree murder.

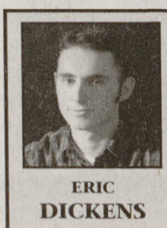
sources said. He could face 10 years in prison. Abraham requires him to submit to interviews with investigators.

aid.

In defense of pornography

Supreme Court justifiably defends racy cable TV channels, puts responsibility on parents

Janet LaRue does not like pornography, especially when it is potentially being seen by young, impressionable children. As an attorney with a conservative activist organization, called the Family Research Center (FRC), LaRue has fought the good fight on several occasions. However, with the FRC's most recent supreme court battle against pornography, LaRue and her cohorts have misconstrued and criticized what is in reality a very smart and solid court decision.



ERIC DICKENS

The courts ruling allows pornography companies to earn profits of their product, which, while offensive to some, is still constitutionally protected free speech. Further, with their decision, the court has pointed out that parents, rather than cable companies or stations, are the ones to be held responsible for a child's upbringing.

Last Monday, the court ruled to dismiss a 1996 federal law that sought to restrict children from viewing pornography on cable television. The gray area of the law allowed for cable companies to simply scramble those unsavory channels' signals from non-subscribing TV's.

This technique results in the cut-up and discolored reception any student has seen when wondering why they call it the Spice Channel. Problem is, this method still let audio and visual snippets of lovin' get through to watchers. This was reason enough for LaRue's FRC to push for the enforcement of another part of the same '96 law which mandated that cable television stations that did not fully scramble the signals of those seedy broadcasts to limit completely the airing of those stations to between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. Aficionados of afternoon scrambled porn were outraged. Not only them, but companies like Playboy Television who earn their daily bread from showing the stuff were outraged that their mid-day

broadcasts could be cut-off even for their subscribers. Thankfully, the supreme court found a loophole in the law, as it is good at doing, and made an intelligent decision.

The court decided that the best solution was found in yet another provision of the 1996 law which mandated cable companies to completely block the signal of any station that an individual customer requested. This provision put the decision up to parents whether they wanted a particular channel, scrambled or unscrambled to be turned off from their television.

This should have been the perfect ending to the debate, but the FRC would not give up its shortsightedness. LaRue immediately chastised the ruling, saying "It's a sad day when the protection of children takes a back seat to the profits of pornographers."

What LaRue and the FRC do not seem to realize is that, while protecting children is important, all people, yes, even pornographers, have the right to earn a buck. Forcing cable TV companies to cut their broadcast time down to eight hours severely cripples their profit making ability.

Max Webber and Janet LaRue may disagree, but that is how capitalism works. The porn industry is an industry just like any other providing their customers with a product they want. Pornography is still constitutionally protected free speech, even if that speech is just moans and groans. Furthermore, the industry has created thousands of jobs for American workers, and not just of the hand and blow variety.

Another point the FRC seems to be missing is that, ultimately, it is not up to porn producers to watch out for America's children.

Pornography in all its forms should be susceptible from outside regulation to keep it from young eyes — and this is already happening. Blocking and, to a lesser extent, scrambling of indecent television stations work. They do not hinder a company's cash

flow nor do they harm those old enough to buy a subscription, turn it on and be turned on.

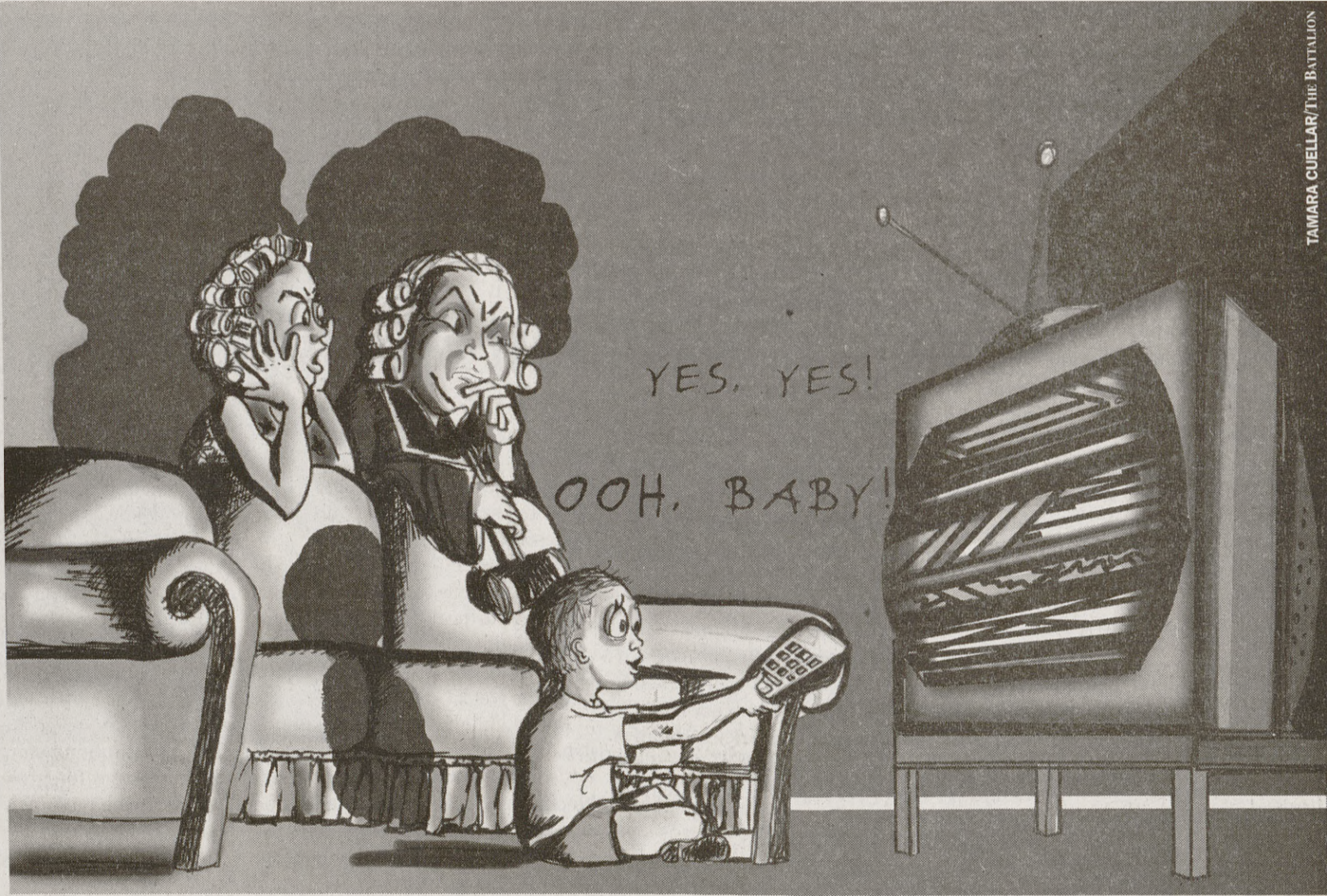
Hugh Hefner should not be held responsible for what the kids of America see, it simply is not his job. His job is to cavort around the Playboy mansion all day in that silly red robe and make sweet, sweet love to the bunnies. However, the ultimate benefit of the supreme court's ruling is that it puts the final decision of what a child sees into the very hands it should rest in — a parent's. The porn industry makes a product, just like the bleach industry

does. It is up to the parent to keep their children from watching porn just as it is their job to keep a kid from drinking a gallon of bleach. LaRue and the FRC should stop demanding pornographers and those who earn a living of off indecent material to constantly have to appeal to the most offended denominator. LaRue may hate pornography like a strange version of *The Catcher in the Rye*, and think it her job to try to protect children from it.

However, producing porn, as filthy, sweaty and depraved as it may be, is the full-

time job of many lucky individuals and the FRC should let them do their job without cutting into their ability to make money. If LaRue wants to save America's children she should go home, call the cable company and block her own TV's channel 69. This is the best and already in place system to keep the kiddies away from the bunnies. Hopefully others will follow and the FRC will stop acting like lawyers and start acting like parents.

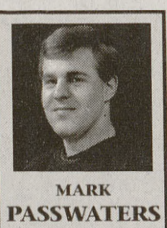
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TAMARA CUELLAR/THE BATTALION

'Most favored nation' status with China beneficial to U.S. economy

In what might be considered an odder coupling than Felix and Oscar, President Clinton and the Republican majority in Congress find themselves allied on a highly emotional issue. A bill granting the People's Republic of China permanent Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status will be voted on this week, and many liberal members of Congress are upset over the measure. They say that such a measure would eliminate the United States' ability to improve human rights in China and would coddle a totalitarian communist system.



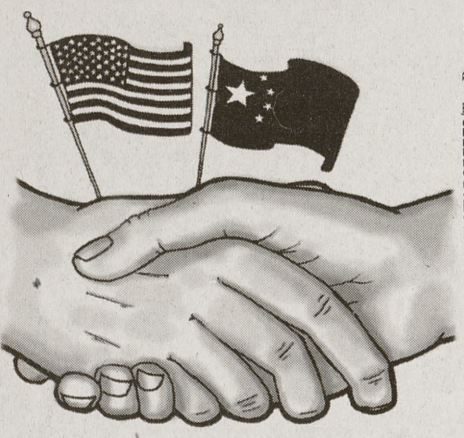
MARK PASSWATERS

Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., gave a speech in the House in which he asked, referring to this bill, "Are we prepared to sell our souls?" No, Congressman — those who vote for the measure are more interested in keeping clothes on American children's backs. To deny China MFN trading status would certainly hold some negative consequences for China; however, it would be economic suicide for the United States.

Liberal members of Congress seem to be under several misguided impressions. The first is that the United States should not conduct free trade with communist governments, such as Cuba. Such a sentiment ignores history and the current economic situation in China. Even during the darkest days of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union traded with each other, despite the fact that the Soviets were considered a far greater threat than the Chinese are now.

Also, China is no longer a communist state in the Marxist model. While it does have a totalitarian government that does not allow dissent, China actually has an economic system that is decisively capitalist. So much for that complaint.

The second gripe is that granting permanent MFN status to China takes away the biggest stick the United States can wield in an attempt to make China change. Increasing tariffs on China, MFN opponents reason, would damage their economy and force China to bow to America's will. Hogwash. American goods and services are consumed by the upper classes of Chinese society, not the great masses of people. Increased prices on American goods and services would be a minor discomfort that could be tolerated. On the other hand, Chinese imports



KELSEY ROBERTS/THE BATTALION

can often be found at such high-class establishments as Wal-Mart. Increasing tariffs on goods coming into the United States would cause price increases on everyday items that people need.

This, in turn, would cause great problems to the American working class, and would damage the rest of the economy as a result. Do the liberal members of Congress need to be reminded that they were elected to represent people in their districts and not people in China?

The final grand fallacy on this issue is that keeping MFN trading status would give China no reason to change. In fact, keeping MFN status is probably the best way to make China reform. Many Chinese have embraced capitalist ideals and have benefited from them. This "entrepreneurial class," as Governor George W. Bush refers to it, has

prospered under the economic changes in China. China's economy, which sputtered under Marxist economic models, has grown rapidly in the past decade. It stands to reason that if the capitalist economic model is that much more efficient than the Marxist one, the political model might behave the same way. The only way democracy has a chance of flourishing in China is with free trade; destroying that option will take any possibility of political freedom in that nation with it.

The opening of the Soviet Union to the ways of the West under Mikhail Gorbachev led directly to the collapse of Soviet-style communism. It stands to reason that taking a similar approach with China might have the same effect. Shutting the door on free trade with China will not cause that nation to change, but will cause harm to the American economy.

At the turn of the 20th century, American Secretary of State John Hay developed the "Open Door" policies toward China. Such policies would not work today, as they were blatant acts of exploitation. In essence, the "Open Door" policies gave each Western power a "sphere of influence" in Imperial China.

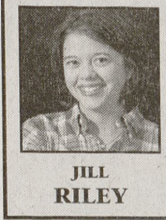
Now, at the start of the 21st century, China is no longer a nation lagging far behind the rest of the world. It is an economic power that must be dealt with as an equal — and this means with limited trade barriers. Giving China permanent Most Favored Nation status would ensure that America's economy will keep running smoothly by keeping that trade with China wide open.

An "Open Door" toward China today would be of great benefit to both nations and should be embraced. If China were to be economically ostracized by the United States, as liberal Democrats desire, it would be a horrible mistake.

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Columbine tape rehashes tragedy

A tough year has passed for those involved in the turmoil following the massacre at Columbine High School, but life has continued and the memories have started, ever so slightly, to blur.



JILL RILEY

That is, until a tape showing viewers the blood-bathed school circulated through the mass media. The tape's purpose, to train firefighters and rescue workers for similar crises, seemed to be legitimate.

Families of the victims heard of the tape and wanted a copy for themselves to aid in lawsuits claiming that officials mishandled the event and failed to take heed of warning signs before the massacre occurred. The courts agreed. And not only did the families gain access to the tapes, but everyone else did too, for the completely reasonable price of 25 bucks.

If only everything in the tape situation were so reasonable. Spreading these graphic scenes around the community surrounding Columbine was wrong. For several days after the tape's release, newspapers and broadcasts showed clips of bloodied textbooks and the library floor littered with cards marking the dead bodies' spots.

Flipping on the television after the tape was released, many in the community were probably plagued with flashbacks of an awful event they were trying to forget. The people of Littleton, Col., have suffered enough. Insensitivity by the media should stop — immediately and completely.

The *Washington Post* published an article reporting the outrage caused by the tape's release to the public, accompanied by — what else? — pictures of the bloody scenes depicted on the tape. A letter to the editor published May 14 asked why *The Post* used the photos if the people involved with Columbine were upset by them. *The Post* should have known that they would not appreciate more bloody photos being published.

Instead of just showing the pictures for that one day, *The Post* still allows willing Web surfers to see the pictures and even view clips of the tape on their Website. In a nation claiming to loathe the amount of violence available for consumption, it is hard to understand why blood and guts still prevail in the news. However, not all blame belongs to the mass media.

First, one must consider that the Littleton Fire Department made the tape. The department even added a soundtrack complete with a Sarah McLachlan song

and an anthem written by Columbine students after the massacre. The department should not have distributed a training tape consisting of graphic scenes from one of the most publicized tragedies of 1999 so soon after the event.

And though the tape's editor probably had only the best of intentions when adding the soundtrack, the musical additions added their own problems, since the department unfortunately forgot to ask permission to use the copyrighted material. Now the fire department is being sued for copyright infringement for a totally unnecessary soundtrack.

Others intimately involved with the massacre cannot claim innocence in this new situation, either. Families of the victims demanded their own copies so they could sue those who did the "wrong" thing when the massacre occurred. It is not hard to imagine that a well-publicized American tragedy is surrounded by as many lawsuits as newsgatherers.

By going to the courts and obtaining copies of the tape so quickly, the families inadvertently allowed everyone access to the sensitive material. The court did what the families wanted — they allowed them a copy of the tape — but they also allowed anyone else to have a copy as well, which is not what the families intended.

According to *The Washington Post*, Jefferson County Attorney Frank Hutfless decided to make the tapes public "in order to avoid additional lawsuits by the public or news media that would likely result in the release of the [tapes] to the general public." This quick

release halted the Littleton Fire Department's plans to edit the tape, as well as shocked the community trying to heal from the tragedy.

Not only did the demands of the families cause their neighbors extraordinary pain, it also brought them extra-gory, extra-long footage of that pain.

The Columbine tape saga gives Americans yet another example of human error amidst tragedy. Unfortunately, the mistakes made caused people more grief, more lawsuits and more nightmares.

Maybe there will not be a "next time" to correspond with the massacre at Columbine High. However, if there is, maybe someone will pay attention to what happened this time, and in the future, tragedies like Columbine will not turn into a \$25 novelty.

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