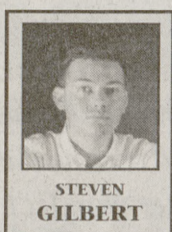


Putting their foot down

Gore unlikely to crack down on Hollywood because of questionable donations

A Gore is a wonderfully talented actor. If the election does not result in a Gore victory, he should seriously consider loading up Tipper and the kids and heading for the Hollywood hills. There is no better example of Gore's acting prowess than a recent production in which he threatens to crack down on Hollywood.



STEVEN GILBERT

Hours later, CNN showed live coverage Al Gore demanding that Hollywood and the entertainment industry clean up their act.

Gore said, "I call on these industries for an immediate cease-fire. Stop targeting, advertising for adult material to young children... Joe (Lieberman) and I are going to establish a six-month period to hold the industry accountable."

Gore, a Hollywood darling, making demands on the industry? A very strange situation, indeed.

The Clinton-Gore administration has collected millions of dollars in campaign contributions from Hollywood glitterati. One might be inclined to think that in this case, and Gore could be biting the hand that feeds him.

Just two days later, Gore and Lieberman were scheduled to make an appearance at a Democratic National Committee (DNC) fund-raiser packed with big-time Hollywood entertainers and later attend a larger fund-raiser in Beverly Hills that same week. This might seem like a pretty precarious situation for Gore to put himself in. Insulting a group of people, blaming them for school shootings (the original purpose of the FTC report) placing restrictions on their means of employment — and then asking them to pony up millions for a campaign fund-raiser? It just does not seem logical.

The Hollywood fund raisers were a great success. The DNC raised more than \$9.2 million dollars straight out of the pockets of the same Hollywood big shots that just last week their nominees were publicly trashing. How did this happen? It sure does not work like that in the real world. The reason is that the whole thing was an act, make-believe, it was all part of one big orchestrated show.

Hollywood and Gore knew it was

just an act, but millions of voters were left seriously thinking that Gore is going to crack down on Hollywood and protect their children from media violence.

"I've been in politics all my life," said Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America. "I know that when you trash the entertainment business, your poll numbers go up."

When asked about the recent attack on Hollywood at a recent entertainment industry fund-raiser, Lieberman replied gently, "We will nudge you, but we will never become censors... Al and I have tremendous regard for this industry."

Quite a change in message from the high profile stump speech. Only one Hollywood insider did not seem to catch on. Screenwriter Joe Eszterhas, whose credits include Basic Instinct and Showgirls, asked his peers not to donate money to the Democratic presidential ticket until the threats of censorship are clarified. Will someone in Hollywood please make sure Joe gets brought up to speed? His email must be down.

There are rumors around Hollywood that Democratic presidential hopeful Al Gore is going to be nominated for an Oscar. With the way he is running his campaign, he surely deserves one.

Everything Gore says or does sounds entirely scripted. He delivers his lines like a seasoned thespian. His aids probably tell him to "break a leg" before he goes on stage.

In a recent appearance on the Oprah Winfrey Show, Oprah asked Gore what he slept in. Gore's well rehearsed reply? "A bed."

His screen writers and prep team seemed to have overlooked that as a possible question, but rest assured that the Gore camp was probably up all night polling and coordinating focus groups trying to find out what answer would best appeal to the American people in case he is ever asked that question again. Then again, it is possible Gore did not get the script.

According to FTC Public Affairs Specialist Mitch Katz, the "Marketing of Violent Entertainment" report was a non-public investigation and the FTC does not schedule the release of their findings based on political influence.

Having no prior knowledge of the report, it must have been quite a daunting task for the Gore production team to read the report (all 346 pages), analyze and orchestrate a live CNN stage show all within the span of five hours.

This sounds like the work of a professional production team (or someone with close ties to the FTC). Next time Gore should sit on the information for a day or two so it does not appear as suspicious.

Researchers have been warning of the negative effects of media violence for many years. If Gore was serious about cleaning up the entertainment industry, he would have tried to do something about it during his past eight years as Vice-President.

As they say on Broadway, "the show must go on."

Steven Gilbert is a senior speech communication major.

Work It, Baby

U.S. workweek fatigues employees



SUNNYE OWENS

Americans are seeing an exhausting new trend within the work force — the end of the 40-hour workweek. In 1938,

the Fair Labor Standards Act declared a 40-hour workweek as a fair and necessary amount of time spent in the workplace. This is not the case anymore. Some companies require their employees to work a mandatory 10 hours of overtime per week without receiving overtime pay.

America is exhausted. Companies should realize that too many hours in the workplace can make their employees feel overworked and fatigued, causing employees to perform poorly and creating accidents. Companies need to respect the American workers and their right to a balanced life of work and play.

With increasing technology comes a faster way to produce goods for America. This technology creates a problem for companies because now there is a need to get their products on the market faster to be competitive.

Instead of hiring more workers, companies are using the employees they already have because it is cheaper. Companies do not want to hire, train and provide benefits for new employees, so they just make the current employees work overtime.

Congress has recently been dealing with workweek issues. The only problem is that aims to help the employers, not the employees who need assistance. Congress is seeking to reduce labor costs for employers. To do this, Congress is considering reducing overtime for employees. Congress needs to wake up.

Too much strain is placed on workers, and the quality of their work is deteriorating.

The 9-to-5 workday should be reinstated in the American workplace. Too much strain is placed on workers, and the quality of their work is deteriorating.

There is increasing discontent in America's work force. Within the year has seen such major workstoppages as the United Airlines strike, Verizon Telephone strike and the Los Angeles Transport Authority strike have taken place.

Such actions harm consumers as well as companies. The solution is simple. Companies should to give their workers a break. Employers misunderstand that their employees have lives outside of the office.

Many workers are being severely injured on the job due to fatigue. On Sept. 20, Brent Churchill became a tragic piece of evidence for lawmakers arguing against mandatory overtime. Churchill only had five hours of sleep in two days after working back-to-back shifts.

He was severely fatigued from the amount of overtime he was putting in. He was killed after grabbing a 7,200 volt cable while not wearing protective gloves.

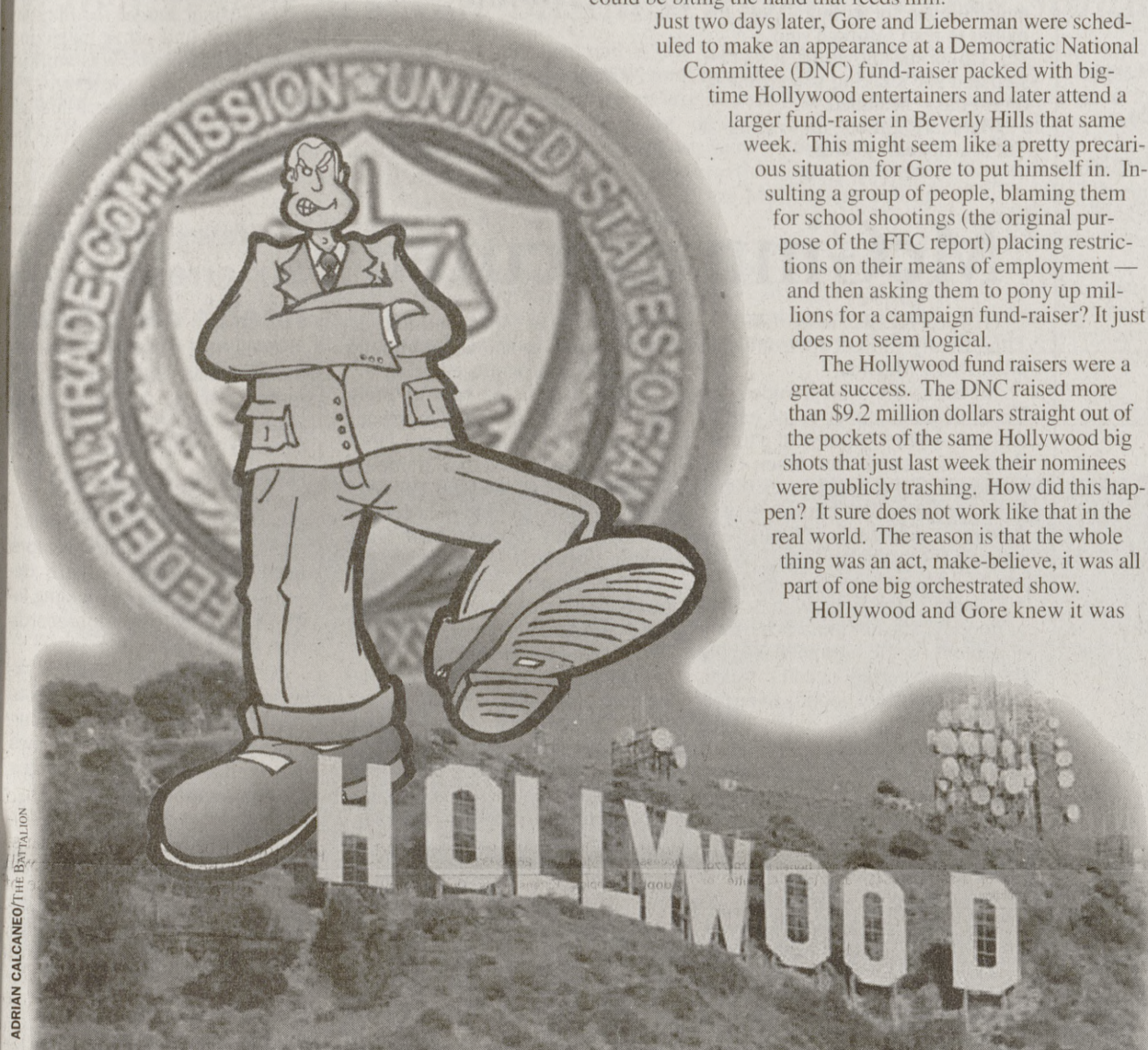
Now the Maine Legislature is considering restricting mandatory labor hours. Churchill's death should be a warning for all employers to back off before more injuries occur.

Americans should not have to compromise their leisure time because they are required to work too many hours. This creates problems for the company and the employee.

Americans should not have to feel fatigued, stressed and overworked. When employees are seriously injuring themselves, something has to be done.

If companies do not change policies soon, they might find American workers are not only tired but enraged.

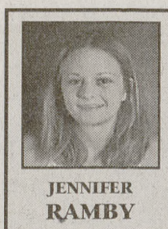
Sunnys Owens is a junior journalism major.



Blurred Vision

Vision 2020 threatens Aggie uniqueness

Vision 2020 is a simple plan that, like all professional documents, takes several hundred pages to explain.



JENNIFER RAMBY

Therefore, with typical college time restrictions, most Aggies have not dissected or examined a document which intends to alter Texas A&M in a major way. Whether the changes are good or bad depends on each individual's view on the success and capabilities of the school today.

In general, Vision 2020 is the name given to President Dr. Ray M. Bowen's goal for A&M: to be ranked in the top 10 of the best public universities in the nation by the year 2020.

While A&M is very close, ranked 15th according to Vision 2020 data obtained from a 1998 issue of U.S. News & World Report the administration wants to make

changes to climb higher on the charts.

By comparing the school to other top public universities — such as University of California at Berkeley, University of Michigan, University of California at Los Angeles, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and others — Bowen hopes to attain this goal.

While this is a prestigious marker for a university to set its sights upon, can the faculty and students, both current and former, ensure it is reached without greatly changing a school so many know and love for its uniqueness?

Will the creators of Vision 2020 elevate academic standards while maintaining a campus strong in leadership, tradition and loyalty? It is important that Aggies everywhere make sure the culture on this campus does not suffer at the hands of "increased excellence."

After all, while some students are Aggies for the superb engineering program, the unmatched agricultural education opportunities, or

A&M's mere affordability, many have other reasons why their blood runs maroon.

For some, it was being raised by Aggie parents that made going to this school right. For others it is the conservative, "down-home" atmosphere unavailable at most other universities.

It is important that Aggies everywhere make sure the culture on this campus does not suffer at the hands of 'increased excellence.'

For many, it is the unique traditions like Silver Taps, the 12th Man and Bonfire that left a lasting impression. Whatever the reason, Aggies need to keep the heart of the Aggie spirit fresh in their minds while change is being discussed. If it is not broken, do not fix it.

This is a rather appropriate cliché for Vision 2020. While supporting above-average academic standards and faculty pay raises is noteworthy, Aggies everywhere must be attentive when administration opts for change.

Vision 2020 states, "the need for change is real. We (Texas A&M) are good, but not good enough." Who decided that A&M is not good enough?

This University is respected around the nation — not for having students with the highest grade-point averages or most intense study habits, but for the outstanding, well-rounded Americans it creates. While it is important, A&M represents so much more.

Competitive organizations encourage leadership; expert athletic facilities promote stamina; Bonfire cut once held an honorable work ethic. Students also learn valuable time-management skills and diplomacy important to their futures.

They study for three exams on Tuesday, prepare research for a club meeting Wednesday, and make

it to work Thursday. They find time to teach illiterate children and adults and stand for the team on Saturday. Are all of these things not equally important and part of a great college experience?

While many aspects of Vision 2020 are honorable, the idea of change should always be questioned. Students come to this school for what it offers. They choose A&M because it is not just another school. A&M is different, and that is what makes Aggies different.

This begins a serial examination of the focal points of Vision 2020 to expose students to the anticipated change on their campus. A complete copy of Vision 2020 — its foundation and goals — is available online by clicking "Vision 2020" on the A&M Website.

This way, the lifeblood of this and all universities — the students — can decide what is, and what is not, "good enough."

Jennifer Ramby is a sophomore journalism major.

Mail Call

Diamond Darlings speak in their defense

In response to Eric Dickens' Sept. 26 column. As last year's Diamond Darling captain, I read with dismay Eric Dickens' bashing athletic support groups.

I was particularly bothered by his completely inaccurate portrayal of our organization. To say our members are "subservient women" who "stand by their men and little else" is extremely insulting. The Diamond Darlings have a professional working relationship with Athletic Department employees in the ticket office, grounds crew, administration, coaching staff and marketing department.

We are a part of the team of men and women in the A&M athletic department who make the Aggie baseball team the strong tradition that it is, not "tag-alongs"

who simply cheer from the stands. Dickens questions the fact that our group has no male members, but Diamond Darlings does not restrict its membership to women and should not be criticized because men choose not to apply to the group.

The members of Diamond Darlings are not brainless groupies with "antiquated viewpoints." We are women with a strong interest in the sport of baseball who dedicate our time to showing the campus what an fine tradition A&M has in its baseball program.

Kathy Lineberger
Class of '01

"Flava U" tasteless

In response to Jason Bennyhoff's Sept. 26 column.

Bennyhoff may be a senior at Texas A&M, but you (Bennyhoff) are also one of

the most uneducated people here.

You think because you have watched a few "black shows" that you have the right to box our race, "culture" as you call it, into your age-old stereotypes? It seems that you have the misconception that every black person on this campus is some butt showing, gold-tooth having thug.

I suppose you think we are only here because of basketball and football scholarships, too.

Well, the actualization is that we are a great deal more sophisticated than you have perceived.

We have earned our place into this University by working just as hard, if not harder than you. We are well educated with vocabularies that extend far beyond the insulting colloquialisms that you attribute to us.

If you were trying to say that A&M should work to make us feel more accept-

ed, then fine, say that. Instead, you made us feel more alienated.

Yes, we do like to see articles that apply to the African American population here.

However, we take strong offense to the kind that degrade, belittle and stereotype us.

After all, I have never seen an article about the Caucasian men here portrayed as wild, spoiled, binge drinking fraternity men who take advantage of the eager freshman girls.

Did that offend you at all? Then take that offense and multiply it to the 10th power, and you will feel as offended as we do.

If you did appreciate what our culture has, you would look further than BET and UPN.

I truly believe you owe every African American on this campus and anywhere else an apology. Unlike your article, this is the real deal.

Maxine Haynes
Class of '03