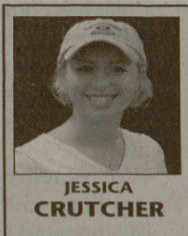


Know where to draw the line

Boy's death should raise concerns about child abuse at boot camps



JESSICA CRUTCHER

A 14-year-old boy recently died at a disciplinary boot camp for minors in Pinal County, Ariz. The cause of death was not known. However, the director of the boot camp, Charles Long, was investigated for child abuse one year ago at a similar camp he directed at Fort Apache. At the previous camp, youths reported being kicked and punched by drill instructors, according to *The New York Times*. The U.S. attorney's office declined to pursue the case, and the Department of Justice neglected to pursue potential civil rights violations.

This case should have been more thoroughly investigated. The children in this disciplinary boot camp may have committed some crime, but they are still children. Even the slightest possibility of child abuse is unacceptable, and any child abuse allegations should be thoroughly investigated.

In addition, police records show that Long was arrested in 1989 after using a sledgehammer to break down the door of his ex-girlfriend's residence, according to *The New York Times*. Records also show that he was arrested in 1991 for punching her while fighting over their 3-year-old son. This man should not have been entrusted caring for children in the first place.

It is bad enough that abusive parents are often allowed to keep their children. However, because of current parental rights laws and government apathy, these situations often are unavoidable. However, hiring people who have violent tendencies to care for children easily is avoidable and utterly inexcusable. It does not matter whether Long still acts on these violent

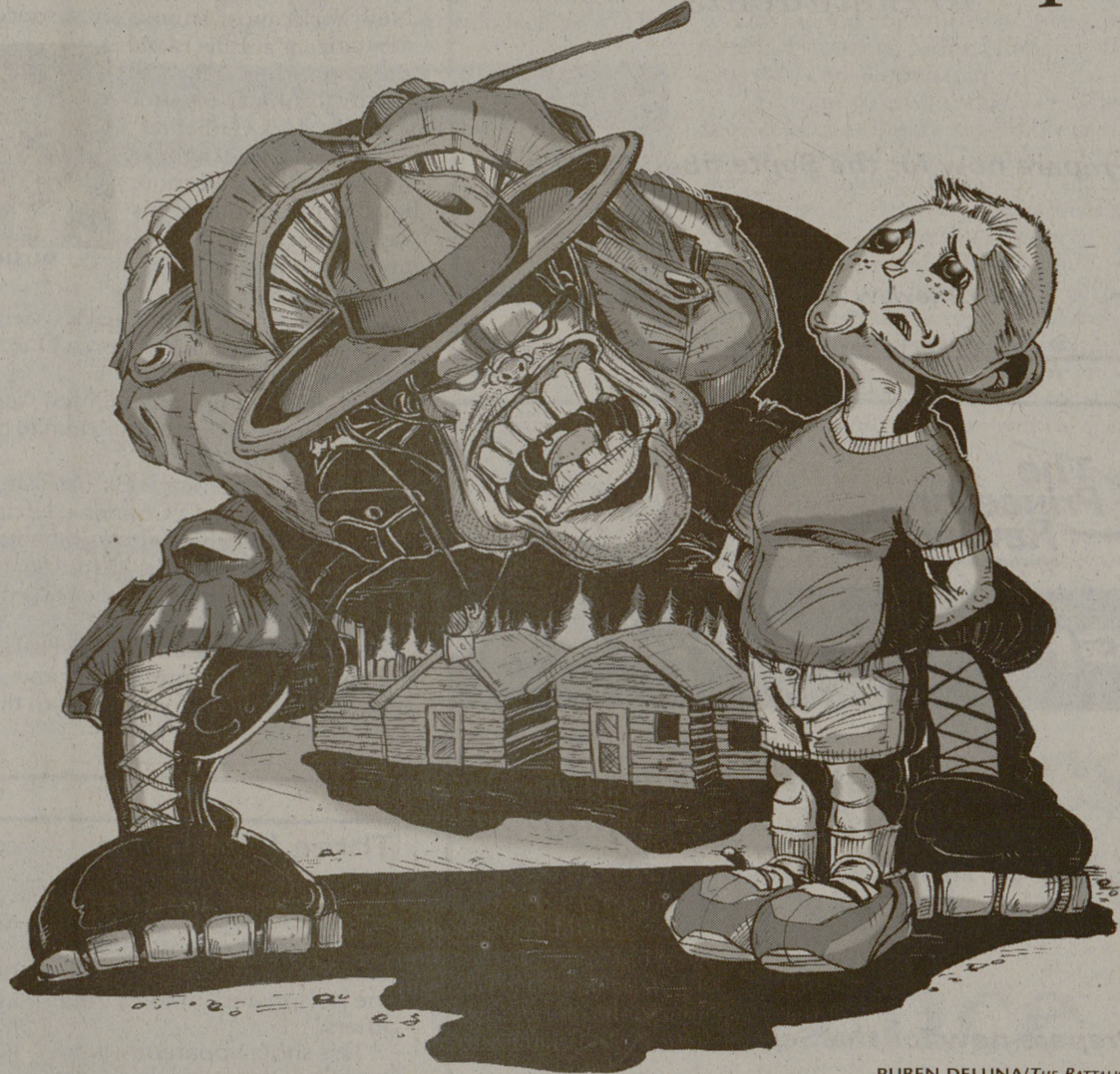
tendencies. It is simply not worth the risk when dealing with the safety of children.

"The camp's regimen included forced marches, black uniforms, and a diet consisting of an apple for breakfast, a carrot for lunch and a bowl of beans for dinner," according to *The New York Times*. In addition, no medical personnel were at the camp, and the children had been under the supervision of 17- and 18-year-old staff members.

Obviously, the diet these children were allowed does not come near meeting recommended daily values of nutrients. All questions of legality aside, causing the children to become malnourished is hardly the best way to retrain their young minds. In addition, it is irresponsible to not keep medical personnel on site, considering the difficult physical regimen.

Juvenile boot camps are meant to be disciplinary, but they are also meant to turn minors away from crime and violence, not toward it. Studies have shown that abused children are more likely to become criminals later in life. According to the National Institute of Justice, maltreatment in childhood increases the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 53 percent, as an adult by 38 percent, and for a violent crime by 38 percent.

With this in mind, boot camps should be much more careful to whom they entrust the care of they troubled children. There is a fine line between teaching a child a lesson and abusing him or her. There are enough unsolved problems of abuse in U.S. homes. It is inexcusable to add to the problem by hiring employees whose past record shows a propensity for abuse as well.



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

Jessica Crutcher is a junior journalism major.

Media blameless for interest in intern

U.S. Rep. Gary Condit is at the center of a media firestorm over the disappearance of an intern he was having an affair with. The 53-year-old Condit, a Democrat from California, has been widely criticized for being tight-lipped in regard to his relationship with 24-year-old Chandra Levy, the missing intern. The media has hounded Condit relentlessly because of his prominence and the public interest in a married father of two having an affair with a woman young enough to be his daughter.

Condit's lawyer, Abbe Lowell, said Condit feels he has been wronged by



JASON BENNYHOFF

the media. He thinks the press has been unfair in its handling of the case and in its fierce scrutiny of his life. But Condit is mistaken — he brought the media frenzy down on himself, and especially since he is a representative of the people of the United States, he has no right to complain about the media poking at his deepest, darkest secrets.

Yesterday, Lowell said in a statement to the press that Condit was fully cooperating with the Washington, D.C., police and would allow them to search his apartment in the city. Lowell also said the police would give the congressman a lie detector test as well as DNA tests if they felt it necessary. In return for this olive branch, Lowell asked the media to refrain from intruding into Condit's family life.

Lowell also said she was sending letters to the heads of several media organizations asking them to leave Condit's family in peace.

While no one finds media feeding frenzies a pleasant thing, no one could expect anything else for someone in Condit's position, especially considering that Levy's family has railed against Condit's handling of the matter. Levy's mother claims that Condit lied to her when she asked him about his relationship with her daughter. He has also been accused of trying to get another lover, a flight attendant, to sign an affidavit falsely claiming they never had an affair.

Given the fact that Condit is a congressman from one of the biggest states in the country, and that he has been tight-lipped in dealing with the

media while being accused of lying to the missing girl's parents, how can he expect anything but to be squarely in the media spotlight? It also seems hypocritical of any politician to complain about the media. None of them complain when the media broadcasts them kissing babies and touting their plans for office while they are on the campaign trail. It is only when things turn sour that the media suddenly becomes the enemy.

There are certain factors that create media, and by extension, popular interest. High at the top of this list would be national prominence of those involved in the story and sexual intrigue. This story has both a prominent key player and multiple affairs. That does not make what the press has done with the story, and its deal-

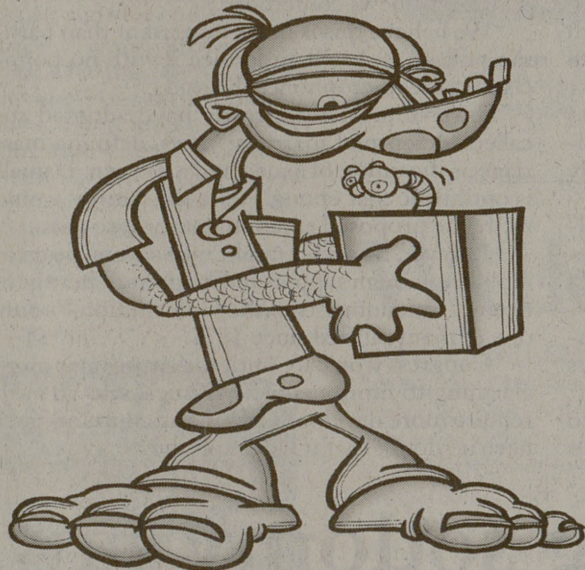
ings with Condit, an example of good manners, but how can Condit complain when he brought it on himself?

As a member of Congress, he employs a number of public relations people, so even had he not known that what he was doing was lunacy, they would have told him. This story would have been national news had the affair been uncovered, even if the girl had not disappeared. Now that she has, Condit is going to have to live with his mistakes painted across every television in the country.

Condit should be grateful that, so far at least, he has only been crucified by the media and not by the police.

Jason Bennyhoff is a senior journalism major.

CARTOON OF THE DAY



IF YOU DON'T GET THIS ... I'M MAKING FUN OF YOU.

THE UN-CARTOONIST ©

Moderates should go home

(U-WIRE) — Although sad but true, the people who run our government are the most indecisive, unaware people in the country. They are moderates. There is nothing worse than a moderate in politics.

These are the people who say they are open-minded because they do not have to follow a set of beliefs. They look at the issue and say there is no right or wrong; we need both. Moderation is the easy way out of making a decision.

Attorney General John Ashcroft put it best with a favorite joke of his, "The only thing in the middle of the road are moderates and dead skunks." Voters who consider themselves to be "in the middle" are a drag on our political system. They instantly become the main focus of every election, regardless if its a liberal or a conservative running. The candidates water down the issues to solve problems in order to get the vote of someone who can't even decide what they believe in.

A moderate electorate is rather disappointing, but it doesn't compare to the damage done by moderate legislators. It

seems to be the new trend in Washington, especially within the Republican Party. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., is a prime example of an inconsistent moderate.

McCain, who claims to be a Reagan conservative, is the No. 1 problem of the Republican Party in the Senate. He takes a liberal/moderate view on almost every major issue — gun control, campaign finance reform, tax cuts and the patients' bill of rights. Then he tries to act like some big Republican hero, ignoring the fact he is making it more difficult for his own party to legislate because they must fight amongst each other instead of only facing the Democrats.

People like McCain who take spineless stances on issues throw the entire system off track. Right now, it's throwing the conservative base out of whack because the Republican Party consists of the most moderates. Let's take campaign finance reform for instance. This is McCain's pride and joy. It has passed through the Senate and is up for debate right now in the House. The effect this "skunk" had on this bit of legis-

lation is horrible. At first, it wasn't an issue. Republicans looked at it as a violation of free political speech. After it passed the Senate, House Republicans decided the way to counter the bill was to aim at the moderates.

Rep. Bob Ney, R-Ohio, helped draft a bill that isn't quite as restrictive, and it's getting the backing of many Republicans. As a result of a moderate pushing his No. 1 issue, congressional liberals picked up on the ability to make the Republican Party appear as if its own members are at extreme odds with one another. It's called playing politics. It was a wise political decision on behalf of the Democrats. Pit your enemies against each other by taking one of their sides. And obviously they aren't going to join the side of those furthest away from them on the political spectrum. Then an alliance is formed, and it makes the liberals and the moderates look good, while making the rest of the Republicans look as if they can't get along. Then they counter with weak, moderate legislation as a compromise.

When there is a real prob-

lem, moderate legislation will do nothing in the long run. A person may be liberal or conservative, but to mix the two is absurd. They are opposites. All the moderate views do is give politicians something to campaign on in the next election.

It's not just with campaign finance reform, either. The exact same thing is happening with the patients' bill of rights legislation. One Republican crossed party lines, so it made others look like they don't care about "the people." So they drafted a moderate piece of similar legislation and used that for debate.

The sick thing about this type of legislation is it appeals to the public. People look at as a great compromise — no one is wrong, no one is right, we must be centered in our thinking. Moderation is the easy way out of something. It is unproductive and unsuccessful. It is the ultimate hypocrisy. There is no way to describe it; it has no basis to argue from.

Moderates, make up your mind.

Zach Calef
Iowa State Daily
Iowa State U.

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