

# OPINION

THE BATTALION

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## New campaign is in poor taste

Texas Department of Transportation is taking advantage of injured woman



SARAH FOWLER • THE BATTALION

The legal limit for intoxication in Texas is a .08 blood alcohol content (BAC). However, there seems to be no limit to what lawmakers will show on televised public service announcements (PSAs) in an effort to discourage people from drinking and driving. A recent Texas anti-drunk driving campaign crosses the line of decency and can only be described as graphic and tasteless. Not only should the campaign be cancelled, it should have never aired.

Jacqueline Saburido, the "star" of the new commercials, was injured in a collision with a drunk driver in 1999. She lost her hair, ears, nose, hands and one eyelid in the crash. Clearly this was a tragedy, and no one is pleased with Saburido's misfortune.

Equally tragic is the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and Texas Department of Public Safety's (DPS) gross misuse of Saburido's disfigured image in their campaign. The TxDOT news release said the agency wanted the announcements to be "hard-hitting." It has succeeded.

The images are so hard-hitting, in fact, they might be sending adults to the restroom to vomit and children into their parents' arms to cry. In the television spots, Saburido appears holding a portrait of herself before the accident in front of her face and talks about herself. As she finishes, she lowers the portrait to reveal her face — nose gone, both ears missing — to the camera. An announcer, in a somber, accusatory tone, then says, "Don't drink and drive. Ever."

While Saburido agreed to do the PSAs, TxDOT and DPS are doing her a gross disservice. The strength of the ad relies on nothing but shock value. She has been reduced to a side-show act by the agencies she trusted, and this com-



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mercial is her stage.

Even worse, the harsh reality is that people will inevitably continue to drink and drive in every state. The campaign succeeds in offending Texans, but does little to dissuade drunk driving.

Saburido has put herself on display, but little good will come of it. Texas has led the nation in alcohol-related deaths for some time, and will probably continue to. Sadly, this commercial will not change that because it insists on trying to terrorize people into good behavior.

TxDOT must rely on more than disgusting its audience if it wishes to reduce or end drinking and driving. The best tools for ending intoxicated driving are education and penalization, neither of which this announcement does effectively.

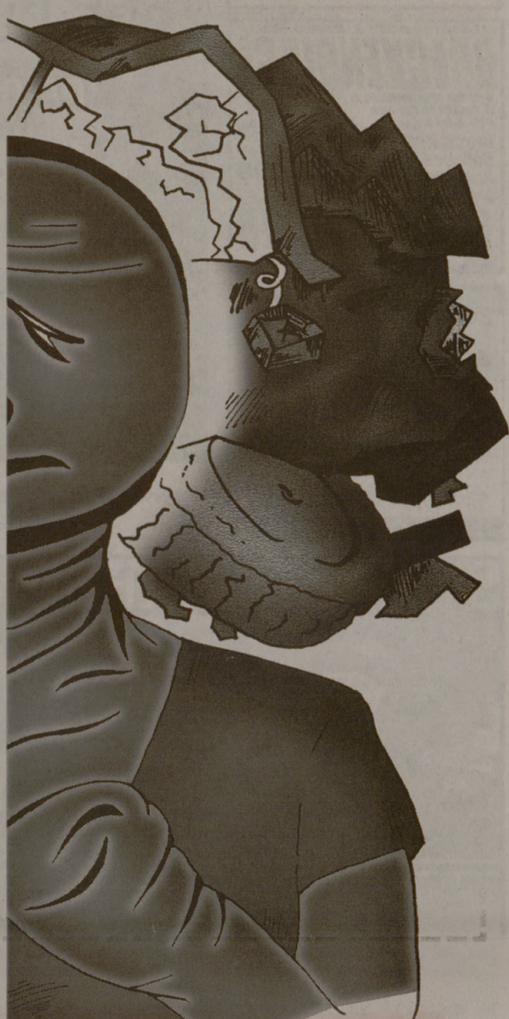
But there are more victims here than Saburido and those unfortunate enough to witness the commercial. Reggie Stephey, the driver of the car that hit Saburido, is having his name bashed daily on television and newspapers across the country.

For his crime, Stephey was jailed in 1999 and convicted in 2001. He must serve seven years in prison and pay \$20,000 in fines. He has gone from a model athlete to a model prisoner, and deals with the fact he's now being demonized across the country.

He has been punished, but his family, friends and those who knew him must live with this graphic commercial and once more be reminded of this tragedy. When an ad is aired that deals with a situation this sensitive, no one walks away victorious.

There is no question Jacqueline Saburido is a survivor, but the new commercials will not heal her wounds or end her suffering. All they will do is make her and countless others revisit a tragic past.

George Deutsch is a senior journalism major.



## Football team deserves praise, not criticism

The student athletes who go out on the field each weekend in front of tens of thousands of screaming fans deserve credit for their efforts, but it seems students prefer to complain about their performance. Aggie football fans should support the team even when things aren't going well, and remember that these athletes are only college students.

Students should realize how much dedication and hard work these athletes put into their sport. These athletes put themselves on the line for thousands to pick out every flaw in their game. Their lives are focused around a series of games that fans watch for entertainment purposes, but football to most of these athletes is their life. Fans notice the outstand-



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ing catches, bone-breaking tackles and heart-pounding touchdowns, but it seems that if the game is a loss, the positive aspects of the game go unnoticed.

Following the A&M loss to the Texas Tech Red Raiders, Aggies complained bitterly about A&M's kicking game. On community forums such as texags.com, there is an obvious trend in the posted messages. It's almost humorous to see that after a losing game there are numerous messages that don't hold true to the Aggie spirit. They include posts with headers such as "Why our football team doesn't win the close games" or "Tangerine Bowl or Houston Bowl — which do you prefer?"

This difference can be seen at Kyle Field as well. Following a loss, while some fans stood in the stadium with a look of disbelief and dismay and awaited the singing of the Twelfth Man, others shouted profanity at a team they

were cheering for just minutes earlier.

Aggie fans seem more eager to participate in a post-win yell practice than support their team no matter the outcome.

True sports fans should remember that one or two plays don't win a game — it takes the entire time and effort of all the players. Yes, some important plays weren't executed as they should have been, but what right do students have to criticize something they only watch from the sidelines?

If someone had stopped Texas Tech's Wes Welker from running back a punt for a touchdown, the outcome could have been different.

Football is not a sport where fans can pinpoint the exact moment that lost the game. One can look at plays that were not executed well, but the way the game is played as a whole is the deciding factor. Maybe it's possible to see where the game took a different

turn, but one person cannot lose a ballgame. One game depends on many different factors, including injuries and momentum. Maybe instead of criticizing a team Aggies should be proud of, students should congratulate the other team on a job well done.

With the season winding down and fewer games left to play, fans should remember that the players work hard. Fans pay money to support these players through school and provide the program with funds, so fans have the right to discuss the team's play. There is a difference in relieving frustration and turning your back on a team when they don't live up to some expectations, and some Aggie fans have crossed that line. It's time for Aggies to show the football team respect for its efforts.

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## Giuliani is not the solution in Mexico City

Former New York City mayor's zero tolerance policy won't solve crime problem

Mexico: so far from God, so near to the United States."

According to Jaime Suchliki, author of *Mexico, From Montezuma to the Fall of the PRI*, this is an accurate summation by Porfirio Diaz regarding Mexico's long-standing sentiments toward the United States. Although many Mexicans admire and respect the United States, they also remember the United States took more than a third of their land, have meddled in their affairs and invaded their country on several occasions. Therefore, it is understandable that many Mexicans distrust and often reject American intervention.

Despite this sentiment, Mexico City has recently hired former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani to rehabilitate the notoriously crime-ridden city under his popular zero-tolerance criminal justice policy. Giuliani, who has been regaled as a source of strength and stability during the Sept. 11 attacks, and his new consulting firm will receive a hefty \$4.3 million for a year's consultation in Mexico City, according to *The New York Times*.

Although Giuliani has displayed tremendous diligence in the past, the magnitude of the challenge he has undertaken, as well as the difficulties of the zero tolerance policy, cannot be ignored. "Back in the early 1990s, New York City was regarded as the



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crime capital of America, featured on the cover of *Time Magazine* as a rotting apple," Giuliani told the *New York Daily News*. "Mexico City faces a challenge like that today."

Giuliani's plan revolves around his policy of zero tolerance, which says all crimes are equivalent and worthy of prosecution. The plan lowered New York City's crime by approximately two-thirds, according to *The New York Times*.

One of the main problems Giuliani will have to deal with before enforcing zero tolerance is the corruption of Mexico's police force. In fact, hundreds of police officers have been arrested as bank robbers, kidnapers, burglars and drug dealers in the past decade, according to the *New York Daily News*. As a result, Mexican citizens are reluctant to report crimes to the police for fear that doing so may exacerbate their problem and expose themselves to more crime.

However, many believe that imposing a strict zero-tolerance policy on the police force would make things worse.

"One idea that won't work is zero tolerance of corrupt police," Jon French, a security consultant and former State Department official, told *The New York Times*. "They've tried that. It only put corrupt cops out on the street to engage in crime full time."

Given the police corruption, the implementation of a harsh zero tolerance policy poses a valid threat to human rights in a

country with few protections against police abuse. For example, according to the *Tuscaloosa News* Web site, last year in Honduras, President Ricardo Maduro, elected on promises to enforce a zero tolerance policy on crime, abolished the need for a search warrant and allowed armed police to enter any home upon will in search of a criminal.

This aspect of zero tolerance government, the fear that false accusations could result in serious punishment for innocents, poses a serious threat to the violence-plagued people of Mexico City and must be considered by those choosing to implement this style of governance.

Although Giuliani may compare Mexico City to New York City, there are intrinsic social and political differences that cannot be ignored. The problems that plague Mexico have been around for centuries and have withstood the efforts of many noble Mexican leaders who tried to correct them. The nation is divided by geography in addition to being divided by huge gaps in economic and social status.

Mexico's unfortunate history with the United States should be acknowledged when considering the chance for success of this risky venture.

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