

# OPINION

THE BATTALION

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## Rewriting history

### Reagan miniseries inaccurately portrays presidency

This fall, there were two hatchet jobs made into movies. The first is the "Texas Chainsaw Massacre," the gory remake of the classic horror movie. The second film of the fall is the gruesome remake of the legacy of President Ronald Reagan, a pitiful attempt to duplicate the presidency, and one that is not worth viewers' time or money to see. CBS was right to cancel the made-for-TV movie about the Reagans, but Showtime will have to make numerous fundamental changes to the film before it does justice to one of the greatest presidents of the 20th century.



MATT MADDOX

"The Reagans," which has been in the making for four years, was scheduled to air on CBS Nov. 18. Much to the displeasure of its producers, there has been a public outcry in the wake of the release of its script. The Media Research Center called on advertisers to boycott the film, while the Republican National Committee asked that CBS submit the film to historians for review prior to release. Critics of the film

are not just coming from the political right, though. Merv Griffin, a Hollywood icon and friend of the Reagan family, said of the film, "It's a cowardly act. Is that what the 'C' stands for in CBS?" Leslie Moonves, the chairman of CBS, acknowledged that the biopic, "did not present a balanced portrayal of the Reagans." In a Pyrrhic victory for conservatives and historians alike, CBS canceled its release of the film, but shifted it to air on Showtime.

The faults of the movie are almost too many to count. The largest fault is the film's complete lack of historical accuracy that portrays Reagan as a man of such small intellectual and moral fiber that only former President Clinton could compare. In one scene, Reagan tells the first lady that AIDS patients deserve to die. Not only did Reagan never say such a thing, as admitted to by the producers of the movie, but Reagan greatly expanded funding for AIDS research during his presidency. Other scenes portray Reagan as foul-mouthed and blasphemous. Michael Reagan, President Reagan's son, told Fox News, "They also have my dad ... calling another person in anger an S.O.B. I've never seen my Dad that angry, and I've never heard him use the 'G-D' word in my life." Meanwhile, at age 92, President Reagan is too stricken by Alzheimer's to defend himself. This kind of

indecent has not been perpetrated on the presidency since Monica Lewinsky became a household name.

The lies in the film don't stop there.

According to critics who have seen its previews, the biopic libelously portrays Nancy Reagan as the true leader in the White House while Reagan is afflicted with Alzheimer's. There is no evidence that Nancy made any executive decisions or that Reagan suffered from Alzheimer's during his presidency. It also falsely shows Nancy as an abusive mother addicted to prescription drugs. This level of smear can only be motivated by one thing: Hate.

After this list of lies, it is little wonder that the undisputable positive events of the Reagan presidency are conspicuously absent from the film. Reagan was the leader of the free world who overcame an assassination attempt, brought the Evil Empire to its knees, led a revival of pride in America and induced the longest period of economic prosperity that the country had ever

witnessed through tax cuts. But, according to the script obtained by The New York Times, these facts are not mentioned in the movie. It is one thing to destroy the reputation of a political figure, but re-writing history to suit a political agenda is a tactic borrowed straight from the communist re-education camps that Reagan helped defeat.

Perhaps the greatest testament to the slanderous intentions of the film's producers is the cast. According to The Washington Post, those making the film are ideological enemies of the Reagan. James Brodin, the actor who portrays President Reagan, is married to Democratic activist Barbra Streisand. Actress Judy Davis, who plays Nancy Reagan in the film, and Craig Zadan and Neil Meronis, the film's producers, are all self-described liberals. Avowed communists must be kicking themselves for not making this kind of propaganda themselves during the Cold War.

CBS was right to stop its airing of "The Reagans." Presenting such grossly fictional material as historical fact does a great disservice to the education of the generation of people now living who do not know what life was like with Reagan as president.

Matt Maddox is a senior management major.



SETH FREEMAN • THE BATTALION

## EDITORIAL

### STUDENT BONFIRE

#### Deciding for one's self

Four years after the tragic 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse that killed 12 students and injured 27 others, Bonfire still has not completely faded from the Aggie consciousness. This year, the Student Bonfire will burn off campus and without University sanction. This organization and its efforts were the subject of a letter from the Department of Residence Life sent to students on campus last month.

The letter stated that the University bears no liability for students who participate in Student Bonfire or any off campus bonfire. The University does have a right to absolve itself from legal liability for an activity that it does not administer. But students should remember that their time off campus is theirs to use as they please.

Students' freedom to do what they wish off campus is a matter the administration should avoid interfering with. Students should not let fellow students or administrators pressure their decision to be involved, opposed or indifferent to the efforts of Student Bonfire. The fact that many students have never seen a Bonfire makes it hard for students to have an opinion on the issue.

The student body should take advantage of the information available to them about the efforts of groups such as Student Bonfire. Students should also consider attending the Student Bonfire on Nov. 22. That way, each person can decide whether he wishes to support attempting to preserve some form of the Bonfire tradition.

An off-campus bonfire is not the same as what existed before the collapse, but it is what is here now, and students have the choice to support or disavow off-campus efforts. But for students to have an opinion on the matter, they must learn as much as they can about the issue first.

## THE BATTALION

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### MAIL CALL

#### Fox not distorting the news

In response to Collins Ezeanyim Nov. 5 column:

Fox News is not the source of so-called "misperceptions" about the Iraq War. It simply reported the facts regarding the perpetual insubordinate behavior of the Iraqi government, voiced by the CIA, presidential Cabinet members, congressman, British intelligence and Australian Intelligence.

Iraq was a threat, though, perhaps not as imminent as suspected. Obviously there have been intelligence problems, but who do you wish to give the benefit of the doubt to—intelligence or Saddam?

Fox may slightly slant to the ideological right, but you mention nothing about the extreme left ideologues that own or run networks such as PBS, CNN or BBC. Most notably is Bill Moyer, president of PBS, a staunch supporter of the Democratic party. Perhaps Fox seemed extremely biased because it reported all the underlying evidence.

Nicholas Davis  
Class 2004

#### Missing Silver Taps disgraceful

Silver Taps, the final tribute to a student who passes away while at Texas A&M, is one of the most honored Aggie traditions. It shows the highest amount of respect that we Aggies have for each other, something that no other university even tries to show. As Aggies, we are bonded to each other. I find it appalling that there are individuals here who have no respect for the Silver Taps tradition.

I spoke to about seven people just before Silver Taps, to make sure they were going to respect the Aggie who had fallen, but I received responses like "I have been once, so I have been to them all" or "Sorry, but I am doing homework right now." It may be just me, but I find that an insult to every Aggie, to Aggie traditions and to this University as a whole.

It is disgusting to know that people look for excuses like homework to not spend 20 minutes per month to respect someone who has died as a student.

Patrick Paschall  
Class of 2007

## Boykin must be removed from post

Relations between the United States and Islamic countries throughout the world are at a crossroads. President George W. Bush and his advisers have spent a long time trying to mend relations with the international community after the Iraq war, but a U.S. general has taken a step in the opposite direction by making contentious remarks about Muslims and their religion.



HAYDEN MIGL

Lt. Gen. William Boykin should step down or be removed from his current position in the defense department in response to his divisive religious comments. The remarks, which he has made in multiple churches during the last two years, do not reflect the attitude the nation or any of its leaders should have at this time.

The controversy began in the middle of October when some of the comments Boykin has made in different churches around the country were revealed. Boykin was recently appointed to his current position as Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence. His comments alluded to the fact that the war on terror is occurring "because we're a Christian nation, because our foundation and our roots are Judeo-Christian ... and the enemy is a guy named Satan." Since then, various civil groups, including the Council on American-Islamic Relations and the Interfaith Alliance, have called for Boykin's resignation. Some conservative leaders are saying the opposite and claim his comments do not warrant punishment. The Pentagon says the general will either not be reassigned or be asked to resign.

Boykin has been described as an outstanding military leader by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, according to a Reuters report. Another BBC News story says he "enjoys a glittering military record as an officer and commando." Both of these descriptions may be true, but Boykin does not seem to be as skilled as an official in the Pentagon. Leaders need to be open-minded to the views of many people, but Boykin does not seem to be open to any beliefs but his own.

Some conservatives have said Boykin was just using his right to free speech when he told various church congregations the war on terrorism is "a battle with Satan." He may have been stating his beliefs, but he should have realized how closed-minded his remarks were.

Bush has had to backpedal as quickly as possible and reaffirm his own beliefs that the war on terror is not a war on Islam. According to an Associated Press story, a Ramadan dinner held shortly after the comments made the news was "mired in an Islam controversy." In the same story, Bush said Boykin's view "doesn't reflect my point of view or the view of this administration." The president needs to back this statement by calling for Boykin's resignation or at least his reassignment.

The comments may have been meant as innocent, and they were delivered to conservative Christians throughout the country. But, no federal official should be allowed to make such insensitive remarks and allowed to keep his job.

The timing of Boykin's remarks could

not have come at a worse time. Americans are losing their lives in Iraq and many more are still occupying Afghanistan, both are Muslim countries. The country is also still interested in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict where anti-American sentiment is already high. Boykin is a shining example of just what America does not need.

His views may be shared by a majority of the American population, but the comments were still uncalled-for.

The Bush administration has said over and over that the war on terror is not a war against Islam. If they want to show that they will stand behind their own statements, Bush and his advisers need to get Boykin out of his Pentagon office. Boykin has stated that he is "not anti-Islam or any other religion," but his remarks were still offensive and

cannot be tolerated. He may have thought his remarks would inspire his listeners, but he was inadvertently using some of the same rhetoric Islamic extremists use to provoke terrorists.

The Bush administration needs to show how important U.S.-Islamic ties are at this moment by removing Gen. Boykin from his current position in the Pentagon. It needs to take a stand and show these type of comments will not be allowed, and that the United States is open to the beliefs of all religions.

Hayden Migl is a freshman

