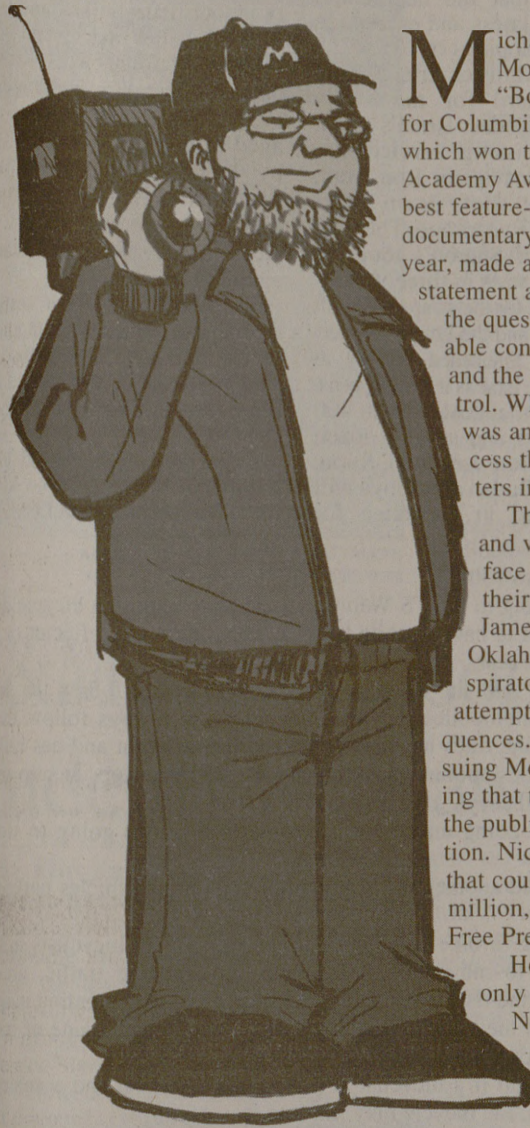


Bowling for truth

Nichols has no basis for libel suit over documentary, gave interview willingly



Michael Moore's "Bowling for Columbine," which won the Academy Award for best feature-length documentary last year, made a bold statement about the questionable condition of America today and the importance of gun control. While the message it sent was an impacting one, its success thrust the real-life characters into the public eye. Those Moore interviewed and videotaped must now face the consequences of their actions. However, James Nichols, brother of the Oklahoma City bombing conspirator Terry Nichols, is attempting to skirt these consequences. Instead, Nichols is suing Moore for libel and claiming that the attempt to educate the public defamed his reputation. Nichols is seeking damages that could reach more than \$90 million, according to the Detroit Free Press.

However, the lawsuit is only an arrogant attempt by Nichols to regain the dignity he willingly gave up when he agreed to be interviewed by



SARA FOLEY

Moore for the documentary. In the film, Nichols was questioned about the Oklahoma City bombing and asked additional questions about gun control and his own gun ownership. Whether it was Moore's intent to steer the interview toward that subject is inconsequential; Nichols answered all of the questions without hesitation, and even led Moore into his bedroom to show him where he kept his gun. Of his own free will, Nichols allowed himself to be videotaped, and therefore willingly made himself subject to the scrutiny the film's success may have brought.

Nichols also claims that the film linked him to the terrorist attacks in Oklahoma City. Unfortunately, Nichols is undeniably linked to it whether it is public knowledge or not because his brother was one of the conspirators.

In the lawsuit, Nichols lists a series of counts including invasion of privacy, intentional infliction of emotional distress and defamation of character. For the film to actually be libelous, malicious intent would have to be undeniably present in Moore's portrayal of Nichols.

Moore clearly had the overall effect of the film and his message to the public as his highest motivation and the basis for all of his editing decisions. It is clear in the finished product that Moore did not set out to destroy Nichols' character or to cause emo-

tional distress. Moore set out to alert America to what he saw as the reasons behind such tragic incidents as the Columbine shootings.

While Moore may have intended to probe into issues such as gun control, Nichols had the option to refuse to answer, which he did not exercise. His opinions and character were truthfully represented in his videotaped replies.

To sue merely because of the film's wide acclaim that caused more people to become aware of his stance will only cause further jading of Nichols' character. What began as him being a representative of someone who supported gun ownership will be complicated with the lawsuit, portraying him instead as greedy and egotistical.

Instead of suing because he is unhappy about the impact of Moore's film, Nichols must learn not to say something he wouldn't want repeated to the general public. His portrayal in the film was not taken out of context or untrue, and it only allowed Americans to see the possible effects of gun ownership, exemplified in one person. The focus of the film was not solely Nichols, and the result was nothing more than a widespread acknowledgement of the truth.

Sara Foley is a junior journalism major.



IVAN FLORES • THE BATTALION

MAIL CALL

Love and support through a difficult and sad time

Our thanks and gratitude are extended to Texas A&M students, administration, faculty and friends of our son Levi Windle. Going through such difficult and sad days has made us realize some very important things in our lives. No one has too many friends. The love and support of those friends of Levi and his brother Brody and our family and friends has been a comfort.

The world is in good hands. The popular belief among the older generation is that the young people of today are too self-serving and self-centered to lead us into the future. We have witnessed young people who grieved and yet were concerned with our well-being and what they could do for us. The memorial service was put together so nicely and lovingly in just a short time by young men and women who cared. As Levi would say they "got 'er done" and it was fantastic and heartfelt and heartwarming. We have no worries about the leaders of tomorrow because we have seen what they can do today.

Texas A&M has always been dear to our hearts, because that is where Levi considered home, but it has become even dearer because of the love and concern shown in our time of need. It is just so amazing that a University with such a large student population is concerned with one student. The sense of family is real and great and very much appreciated. We understand even more why Levi didn't want to graduate too soon!

To all the Bonfire 2003 participants — please know Levi will be with you. So, build safely and may it burn brightly.

Steve and Gayle Windle
Parents of Levi Garrett Windle

Student Bonfire leadership vital to A&M campus

As a former student and new resident of College Station, it has been my pleasure to offer my services as a physician to the leadership of Student Bonfire. The administration's depiction of them as disloyal renegades couldn't be farther from the truth. I have found them to be humble professionals doing their part to continue a tradition that is vital to this campus. As a former Corps of Cadets Commander, I am proud to say that Aggie Bonfire is alive and well and will burn on Nov. 22.

Matt Poling
Class of 1990

Running red lights a problem that must be solved

College Station has the sorriest traffic light system I have ever seen. There should be an effort made to time the lights on the major roads so that a driver can hit three green lights if they go the speed limit.

The police department needs to make yellow light citation policy very clear to drivers and

inform them of it. Though, this may defeat the purpose of traffic citations being this sorry excuse for a city's main source of income. I bet you could kill someone and never be caught by the police unless you sped away from the crime scene or parked your vehicle in a wrong spot. I can't wait to graduate.

Gwendolyn J. Theodoseau
Class of 2006

Society must protect fetuses from potential abuse

In response to Jon Steed's Nov. 3 column:

Mr. Steed recently argued that more women should stand up against bans on partial birth abortions. Unlike many of the issues we have dealt with throughout the history of our country, the abortion issue is one that affects everybody in the same way. Every one of us has, at one point in our lives, been a fetus. At this point in our lives we did not have a chance to be represented or revolt or appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. It seems unfair that just because at one point in our lives we are dependent on someone else does not mean they have the right to abuse that privilege.

I urge everyone who has ever been a fetus to advocate for the rights of everyone who will be a fetus. Because I don't know about you, but I am glad that one of the three fetuses killed during the minute it took you to read this response was not me, or any of my friends or family or you.

Timothy Chen
Class of 2005

Women's choice does not extend past conception

What is all this talk about women losing their reproductive rights? Every woman has a right to decide whether or not she wishes to have a baby — before she has sex. The right to choose ends at the point of conception.

If a person is willing to have sex, they must be willing to accept the responsibility of potentially becoming a mother or father. Americans have lost the concept of being responsible for their actions, and instead now point to the Constitution to bail them out of their problems. True we should teach of the dangers of unprotected sex, but those teachings will be for nothing if there is always a way out of our mistakes. With abortion, there is no need to teach safe sex.

The same people who argue against abstinence, the only safe way to prevent pregnancy, argue in favor of killing the unborn. The same people who say we should not execute mass murders argue for allowing the mutilation of partially born children, and it is high time our leaders stood up to this hypocrisy and stood up for what is decent in the world: The innocence of a child.

Richard Auter
Class of 2005

Fox News is not biased, but a 'titan of truth'

In response to Collins Ezeanyim's Nov. 4 column:

I disagree with Mr. Ezeanyim's implication that Fox News has an agenda, and that it somehow makes a priority to promote war around the globe, as well as support President George W. Bush no matter what he does. For years, the liberal media has attempted to malign and destroy conservative values, the very same values that our president works to promote. Then came Fox News, whose unprecedented and neutral approach to journalism has finally given those of us who respect journalistic integrity something we can enjoy. Unfortunately, those newswatchers who are used to being fed biased reporting from networks such as CNN and PBS immediately label Fox News "conservative," "right-wing" and even "propaganda." It would seem that these people, conditioned to accept weakness in foreign affairs, find that even unbiased reporting is offensive to them. For some reason, they believe that because Fox News reports on the murderous ways of Saddam Hussein and shows the joys of the Iraqi people at our presence, Fox is unconditionally supporting the Bush administration. This is of course false, and only an attempt to malign the titan of truth that Fox News is.

Kurt Branagan
Class of 1993

Immigrants need education to improve lives

In response to Michael Ward's Nov. 5 column:

I support the idea of granting higher education for kids of illegal immigrants. Most illegal immigrants work in low-paying jobs and are here to stay the rest of their lives. I will hate to see their kids ending up in the same low-paying jobs,

sometimes living the same cycle as their parents. As many of you may know, illegal immigrants come to work to the United States looking for jobs that Americans do not want. Many illegal immigrants work in the fields picking fruits and vegetables and in construction sites as laborers.

Many immigrant families are living under illegal status due to the long process of legalization imposed by the Department of Immigration that lasts five to 10 years. I think it's a waste of time if the high school student has to wait that long before being eligible to go to college. Mr. Ward also mentioned that only citizens should serve in the military. Let me tell you, that I served as a non-citizen of the United States during Operation Desert Storm, and I earned my citizenship months later. Non-citizens in the armed forces serve with pride and take jobs that not all Americans want.

Salvador Guerrero
Part-time Student

Boykin's remarks did not represent hatred of people

In response to Hayden Migl's Nov. 6 column:

I respect all followers of Islam, yet I am supportive of Lt. Gen. William Boykin. Something most people don't understand or try to about Christians is that we can fully love and respect our fellow man and yet totally disagree with their actions and/or their beliefs. Boykin was speaking about his political views in a spiritual manner, in a spiritual setting.

Ephesians 6:12 clearly defines who is and isn't our enemy. The Islamic people are not our enemy, nor was Boykin implying that they are Satanic or represented Satan. God forbid we speak of political issues in the church, let alone speak his name in politics. That would only be acceptable by the media if it was used in vain.

Joshua Clay Jacobson
Class of 2004

