

Presumption of guilt

Shirts purchased by police officers in Bryant case undermines justice system

Last month, the police officers and district attorney office employees who were investigating the sexual assault case against Kobe Bryant were simultaneously ordering shirts that indicated his guilt, according to Foxnews.com. The shirts had a hangman on the front, with messages signifying Bryant's guilt and unfaithfulness on the back.

Eagle County Sheriff Joe Hoy told The Rocky Mountain News that the officers wanted the shirts as a souvenir, and that the employees were allowed to wear whatever they wanted during off-duty hours. This policy may not be against the law, but it will prohibit the effective enforcement of it by police.

The suggestion that the police have determined Bryant's guilt could imply that the police had their minds made up while the case was still being investigated, tainting any legitimate investigative work they did. Even if their minds were made after the evidence surfaced, their commentary on the situation has the potential to sway the public's opinion as well, since the police officers' stance could be held in high regard by community members.

Police officers and those at the district attorney's office serve as leaders and enforcers of the law, and should not mock it. While many commentators may see no harm in producing shirts that promote either side of a current event such as this, the individuals who ordered the shirts should be above the commotion of the case and promote the goal of an unbiased jury.

The process of choosing impartial jury members can be complicated in itself, but only more problematic when the case is one that has drawn national media attention. In *People v. Bryant*, jurors chosen have most likely heard each minuscule detail of the Bryant scandal as it unfolds in their hometown. It is likely they could already have

made up their minds based on media information they already received, connections to the victim or previously conceived notions about Bryant as a public figure before the legal incident.

Potential jurors who see the district attorney or his employees in public wearing shirts that belittle the incident to the point of ridicule only have another reason to resort to their own foolish reason for choosing sides as well. The situation has deeper implications than wearing a particular shirt or even believing one person's testimony due to the fact that these individuals could be construed as experts from the standpoint of community members.

Wearing a shirt can be seen as freedom of expression, and by all means do the officers have a right to purchase what they please. However, the officers ordered 76 shirts, which would be enough for most of the staffs of the two offices, according to Foxnews.com. When the individual expression is translated into a group effort, the inferences of Bryant's guilt grow dramatically. Instead of one officer believing the evidence leads toward Bryant's guilt, it may seem to a juror that it is the position of the police department, regardless of the actual evidence presented in the courtroom.

There is a place for political commentary and satirical comment, but it does not belong in the police station. The officers have done their job to investigate and deliver the evidence. Now it is left to the jury members and

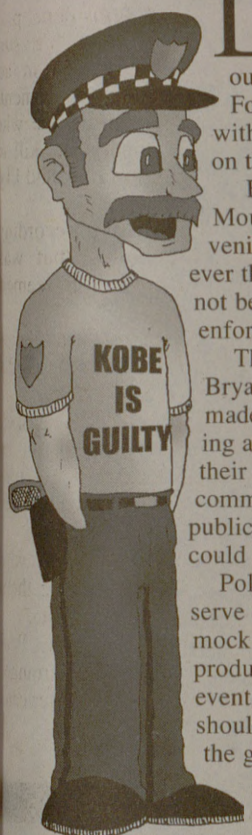
judge to draw conclusions, without the intervention of petty sensationalism.



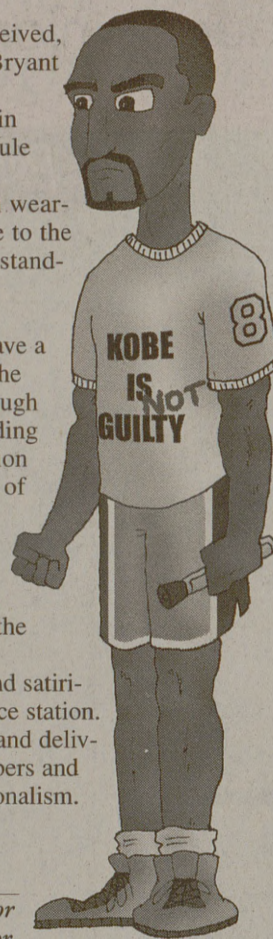
SARA FOLEY

"The suggestion that the police have determined Bryant's guilt could imply that the police had their minds made up while the case was still being investigated, tainting any legitimate investigative work they did."

Sara Foley is a junior journalism major.



JOSH DARWIN • THE BATTALION



Aggies' refusal to leave state hurts job opportunities

Lockheed Martin recruits heavily at Texas A&M every semester. The majority of the recruiting teams are composed of former students. Lockheed Martin is a corporation that hires more students from A&M than from any other university. It appreciates the Aggie strong work ethic and can-do attitude. Still, during the Sept. 18 computer science department senior seminar, Will D. Bell, a software engineer with Lockheed Martin, said it was tough to find Aggie graduates willing to relocate outside of Texas for possible employment.

Unless special circumstances prevent them from doing so, A&M job seekers should be as open as possible with regard to location. There are professional and personal benefits associated with a willingness to relocate for potential employment.

Unfortunately, the lack of geographic mobility among A&M graduates is not a new complaint.

This can be seen in a 1999 report prepared by members of the Strategic Policies Research Group of the Texas A&M University System. The report detailed the perceived strengths and weaknesses of Aggie job candidates by many prospective employers. One of the biggest weaknesses of A&M job candidates cited by employers was their lack of geographic mobility. Specifically, the report noted, "In fact, they often did not want even to leave the city in which their alma mater is located or their hometown. ... Representatives of industry repeatedly

emphasized that for many students, this is not a preference, but a requirement." The report also states many Aggies say location in College Station, Austin, Dallas or Houston is mandatory. Others say they will not work outside of Texas.

This is disappointing. It is understandable why many Aggies would prefer to work in Texas. It's a singular state with great people, but Aggies must be willing to leave their comfort zone if they are to maximize their employment opportunities.

Sometimes circumstances limit the places where an Aggie can work. But many Aggies unnecessarily limit their job choices by refusing to move outside of Texas. There are four main reasons why an Aggie looking for employment should be geographically flexible.

The first is the strongest and has already been mentioned: A willingness to relocate has the benefits of more opportunities. For example, according to Lockheed's college student careers Web site, Lockheed offers a "universe of career choices" in approximately 40 companies. But most of these opportunities are outside of Texas.

Secondly, those who are willing to relocate are also targeted for promotions. Many A&M job seekers are often inundated with statements on how hiring companies have become more global. Workers are rewarded for their willingness to go to various locations and earn their employers more profit. Those who are not as flexible limit their career mobility, as stated by employers in the

Strategic Policies Research Group report.

Thirdly, Aggies can also help strengthen the reputation of the University by relocating. It can be assumed most Texans are aware of the reputation of A&M graduates. But employers outside the state will need to experience A&M graduates firsthand to build strong word of mouth about this University.

And lastly, besides the professional justifications, there are also personal reasons why Aggies should consider relocation. The world is full of different people, cultures and places. Not everyone will have the opportunity to experience these.

Ultimately, A&M graduates must take advantage of what may be the most flexible time in their lives. Later in life, most Aggies will probably be married with offspring, and it will not be

as easy to relocate, even if a great opportunity comes along. But many current students have little preventing them from experiencing the world.

For Aggie job candidates, the thought of relocating to a place that may be radically different from Texas can be frightening. But when the right opportunity comes knocking, it should be approached with excitement and enthusiasm.

Collins Ezeanyim is a senior computer engineering major.



COLLINS EZEANYIM

"One of the biggest weaknesses of Aggie job candidates was their lack of geographic mobility."

MAIL CALL

Using children in protest not harmful

In response to a Nov. 13 mail call:

Having parents that were both "hippies," my sister and I learned at an early age the importance of peaceful protesting. As a child, I attended demonstrations for "peace and justice" movements as well as rallies for the teacher's union. I also helped my mother recruit voters to support anti-death penalty political candidates. Perhaps, I seemed as disengaged as the child Ms. McNealy referred to, but these experiences ultimately laid the groundwork for the person I would become.

I have developed into my own person with my own beliefs and while, these days, most political "discussions" with my parents are heated disagreements, I appreciate that my parents raised me to have strong convictions and always to stand up for what I believe in no matter how unpopular the message or how strong the opposition.

She states that it is irresponsible for parents to use their children to further their own moral beliefs but I have to ask: If parents do not instill in their children a sense of morality and social responsibility, then whose duty is it?

Linda Holifield
Graduate Student

Libel process should be the same for all

In response to Hayden Migl's Nov. 14 column:

Mr. Migl's column correctly states that the lawsuit by Suzuki against Consumer Reports is bogus. However, the issue before the U.S. Supreme Court was not really the merits of the lawsuit, but the process. Consumer Reports was arguing that they are protected by free speech and press and so the case should be thrown out. More precisely, they argued that Suzuki's case is so bogus that it should be thrown out. In other words, that Suzuki did not meet the test of libel law in terms of knowingly reporting false and damaging information, but the lower courts said that there was enough to proceed to trial. Such findings are rarely overturned, given that a trial hasn't even taken place yet.

I expect Consumer Reports to be exonerated, and I think Suzuki has only brought bad public relations on themselves by pursuing the lawsuit. However, Consumer Reports was incorrectly arguing for what amounted to a different threshold of libel for them than for others.

Hank Walker
Department of Computer Science

Protesting against abortion ineffective

In response to a Nov. 14 mail call:

Regardless of one's opinion on when life begins or whether abortion is a right every woman should have or not, the fact of the matter is that abortion is not the real problem and protesting abortion solves nothing in the end. Perhaps we should be protesting the cause of the abortion dilemma, not the consequence. Most abortions are the result of an unplanned pregnancy where the woman feels, often rightly, that she has no other option. Protesting the unplanned pregnancies or premarital sex and educating students on safe sex and birth control would be much more effective.

Perhaps if students were educated and exhorted to make responsible choices as opposed to being presented with gruesome images by middle-school-age children, the rate of unplanned pregnancies would drop. Then less women would be backed into that corner where she is forced to choose. And, please remember, our bodies, our choices, and we must all live with the consequences of our choices.

Alyssa Rosenbloom
Class of 2006

Time with family more important than game

In response to a Nov. 14 mail call:

I am sorry that some students feel it is "disgusting" how sports passes are being sold left and right for the game versus Texas. This is being blamed on a season that may not have the best record and a waning Twelfth Man, but I can assure you there is a reason far better than these: the Thanksgiving holiday.

Though it may offend many, A&M football is not my top priority. Whether we win every game or lose every game in a season up to now, I will be

at home with my family for Thanksgiving just the same. For several families, I'm sure the game is part of their own family tradition, whether they watch it from the stands or from the couch. So do not tell me and other travelers to "suck it up" and get in the stands.

If being in Kyle Field just to say you supported the Twelfth Man for the University of Texas game is more important to you than time spent with your family gathered around the dining room table, then I feel sorry for you. I wonder if you will still feel the same when you have a family of your own.

Krystal Krenek
Class of 2004

