

## An issue of morals?

Denton pharmacist had no right to refuse woman RU486 pill on moral grounds

Pharmacists can't deny RU486 to rape victims, yet an Eckerd pharmacist did this very thing for the sole purpose of advancing his personal moral beliefs.



LINDSAY ORMAN

Protesters wielded signs with slogans including "Got raped? Eckerd doesn't care," in reaction to a Denton pharmacist's decision not to fill a prescription for the RU486 morning-after pill. This unprofessional refusal on the pharmacist's part is absolutely excusable and made even worse by the fact that the woman he denied the pill was seeking emergency birth control after the ordeal of being raped.

The pharmacist defended his decision by saying that "this medicine is designed to end life and I can not abide by that," as an unnamed friend of the victim told KLTU.com. However, the pharmacist succeeded in embarrassing and heaping judgment upon someone who had just experienced the emotional and physical trauma of rape, and a person with any shred of morality, sensitivity or compassion should not be able to abide by that.

"A rapist breaches somebody's rights, and on top of that, we don't need rape survivors to have their rights breached again. You can't be neutral on this," Aaron Benjamin, coordinator of the Men Against Violence group at the University of North Texas, told the North Texas Daily. Many North Texas students were among the group of about 40 protesters, which also included members of the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance.

Students were not the only ones to express outrage at the pharmacist's actions. Pat Cheek, a retired school teacher and 1970s candidate for the Denton City Council, joined the protest saying, "I don't care whether I believe in that drug or not. The whole point is that the woman was refused a doctor's prescription," she told the North Texas Daily.

And that is the whole point. A pharmacist's primary responsibility is to fill prescriptions, and this one failed miserably. Regardless of whether the woman seeking the prescription was a rape victim, the pharmacist should not have made such a decision based on his own moral convictions, which are inconsistent with company policy, according to Juan Gallagher, vice president of communications for Eckerd Corp.

Furthermore, what he did was illegal. A pharmacist may only refuse to fill a prescription if it could be detrimental to the patient's health (ie: if he suspects abuse or if there is a danger of drug interaction). "The law does not say that the pharmacy can decline because of moral ground," Gay Dodson,

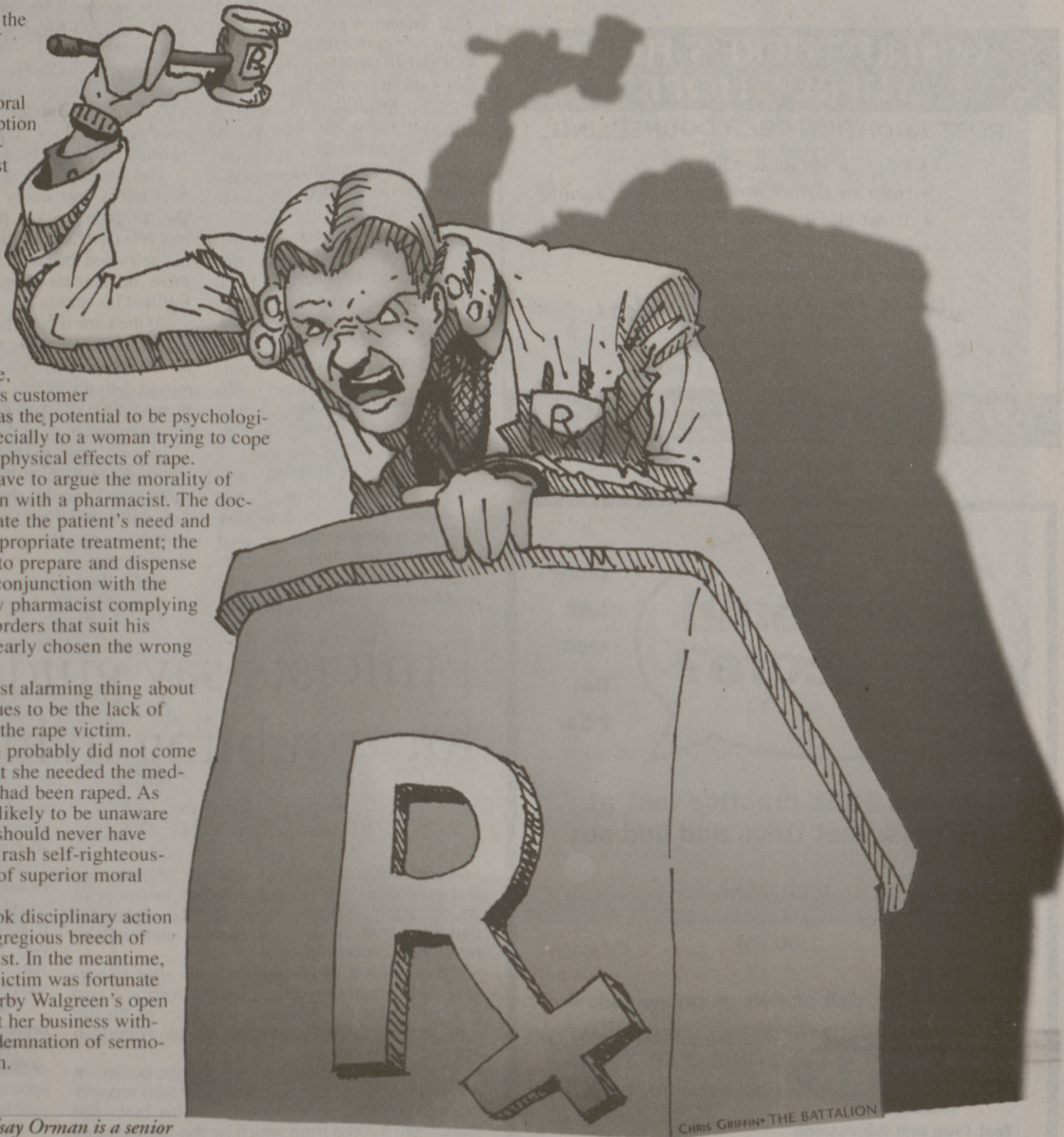
executive director to the Texas State Board of Pharmacy, told The Associated Press.

"If they have a moral problem, it is their option not to stock the product," Tyler pharmacist Mark Sullivan told KLTU.com about the role of ethics in pharmacy practices. To stock the drug — and then decline filling a customer's prescription for it — is not only bad business practice, but also a horrendous customer service policy and has the potential to be psychologically damaging, especially to a woman trying to cope with the mental and physical effects of rape.

No one should have to argue the morality of receiving medication with a pharmacist. The doctor's job is to evaluate the patient's need and respond with the appropriate treatment; the pharmacist's job is to prepare and dispense the prescription in conjunction with the doctor's orders. Any pharmacist complying only with doctor's orders that suit his moral stance has clearly chosen the wrong profession.

However, the most alarming thing about this incident continues to be the lack of sympathy shown to the rape victim. Understandably, she probably did not come in and announce that she needed the medication because she had been raped. As the pharmacist was likely to be unaware of her situation, he should never have presumed in a fit of rash self-righteousness to be a person of superior moral authority.

Eckerd rightly took disciplinary action against such an egregious breach of policy and public trust. In the meantime, this particular rape victim was fortunate enough to find a nearby Walgreen's open and willing to accept her business without offering the condemnation of sermonizing condescension.



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## Bush's intelligence on Iraq wasn't flawed

Bi-partisan panel reviewing U.S. intelligence on Iraq should be unneces-

Last Friday, President George W. Bush signed an executive order establishing a bi-partisan panel to review U.S. intelligence related to the Iraq war. Because Bush's decision to go to war was not based on faulty intelligence, this panel is unnecessary. In fact, U.S. intelligence efforts have been very successful in the War on Terror.



DANIEL ROSSELL

To think that Iraq didn't possess, or at the very least aimed to possess weapons of mass destruction is naive. In the past, Saddam Hussein has shown the world that he had an extensive collection of illegal weapons. Saddam has used chemical weapons against his own people and against other nations in the Middle East. In a recent speech, CIA Director George Tenet stated, "Concluding that Saddam had no interest in rebuilding his weapon programs would have ignored his long and brutal history of using them."

In fact, weapons inspectors have proven that Saddam has tried to expand his weapons capabilities over the last decade. The Iraqi Survey Group, the group responsible for searching Iraq for evidence of weapons of mass destruction, has confirmed that Iraq had an extensive ballistic missile program. These missiles were being built in violation of U.N. sanctions. It is unlikely that

the missiles were being developed for anything other than use as platforms for biological or chemical weapons.

Furthermore, analysis of the Iraqi situation from numerous different countries' intelligence networks all led to similar conclusions. Iraq either possesses or is developing weapons of mass destruction. It is not just a coincidence that the intelligence from the United States, Britain and other sources all showed the same thing.

Even if weapons of mass destruction haven't been found, it doesn't mean that U.S. intelligence was wrong. There are numerous reasons why weapons of mass destruction haven't and may never be found. The weapons could have been moved outside Iraqi borders to another nation hostile to the United States. Weapons could have easily been hidden around the country. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld points out that the hole Saddam was found in, "was big enough to hold biological weapons to kill thousands of people."

The most probable explanation is that Saddam

did his best to destroy all evidence of his programs just to make the United States look bad. David Kay, leader of the Iraqi Survey Group, reported, "The Iraqis systematically destroyed and looted evidence before, during and after the war." In order for there to be evidence to

**"David Kay, leader of the Iraqi Survey Group, reported, The Iraqis systematically destroyed and looted evidence before, during and after the war.' In order for there to be evidence to destroy, the programs had to exist in the first place.**

destroy, the programs had to exist in the first place. Bush has been highly criticized for overstating the threat posed by Iraqi weapons programs. In his 2003 State of the Union address Bush argued that Iraq posed an "eminent danger" to the world. Intelligence reports never stated that Saddam had the ability to directly attack the United States. However, that doesn't make him any less of a threat. To critics, an eminent threat means that Iraq has missiles aimed at the United States ready to launch. By that time, it would be too late. Iraq was an eminent threat because they were developing weapons to attack the United States and the world.

Intelligence efforts have also aided in other aspects of the war on terror. Tenet points out that U.S. intelligence led to the capture of Khalid Sheik Mohammed, the mastermind behind the 9-

11 attacks, not to mention the numerous Iraqi officials and al-Qaida operatives captured in the fight against terror.

Additionally, U.S. operatives infiltrated Libya's supplier network and discovered that the Libyans were restarting their nuclear weapons program. This information was essential to U.S. diplomats' efforts at negotiating with Libya. These negotiations led to Libya's decision to dismantle its weapons program.

Due to the necessary secrecy in the intelligence community, the public usually isn't notified when U.S. intelligence does something right. The only stories that make the news are the ones showing when a mistake is made. Terrorist groups around the world have undoubtedly been planning another Sept. 11. The fact that there hasn't been another terrorist attack on the United States is a good indication of the success of U.S. intelligence efforts.

Were intelligence reports regarding Iraq's weapons of mass destruction completely accurate? Of course not. Uncertainty is inherent in the intelligence business. Were the intelligence reports reliable? Absolutely. The United States has the best intelligence network in the world, and it has demonstrated its effectiveness in the War on Terror.

Daniel Rossell is a junior nuclear engineering major.

### MAIL CALL

#### Bonfire is 'truest form of Aggie Spirit' around

In response to a Feb. 10 mail call:

Miss Malone, how dare you. Were you there at 2 a.m.? Did you search for your friends, not knowing if they survived?

The people who put together the off-campus effort are old Bonfire leaders, and we were there. So do not tell us about the "point" of Bonfire. Doing so doesn't simply disagree with my opinion; it attacks the very essence of why I am proud to call myself an Aggie.

Bonfire is not about Burn. To quote a popular phrase, "We only burn it to make room for next year." Cut and Load are far more important, and they have always been off campus.

But it doesn't matter. Bonfire isn't confined by location; its spirit is much bigger than that. It's about leadership, camaraderie and hard work. It transcends generations. It's the truest form of the Aggie Spirit that I've ever seen.

Student Bonfire's efforts exemplify all of these qualities, and every old Bonfire guy who has come out has agreed. Don't believe me? Then here's a challenge: come and try it. It might just change your mind. Bonfire

has a way of doing that to people.

BTHOB 2004,

Luke Cheatham  
Student Bonfire Founder/Director  
Class of 2003

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 200 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number. The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 014 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters also may be mailed to: 014 Reed McDonald, MS 1111, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Fax: (979) 845-2647 Email: mailcall@thebattalion.net

