

Porn in the U.S.A.

Legislation should be introduced to outlaw pornographic films in vehicles



COLLINS EZEANYIM

As more Americans outfit their vehicles with DVD players, a disturbing trend is emerging: car-owners playing X-rated films while driving. Worse still, these films can be seen by anyone near them — often children in other vehicles. This sort of disgusting and flagrant behavior requires government intervention. Lawmakers across the nation should introduce bills that would make playing pornographic films in vehicles illegal.

In February, Andre Gainey, 35, of Schenectady, N.Y., was arrested for playing a pornographic movie titled "Chocolate Foam" in his Mercedes-Benz, according to USA Today. Not only was the movie visible to the driver, but it was also playing in the passenger-side mirror and on screens in the back of vehicle's headrests.

While it is fortunate police were able to charge Gainey with a public display of offensive sexual material and operating a vehicle in which a TV screen was visible to the driver, more specialized laws are needed to address this issue. This should be done as a deterrent to anyone foolish enough to watch porn while driving.

Matt Sundeen of the National Conference of State Legislatures told USA Today that no state expressly prohibits the playing of X-rated movies while driving, but a couple of states are taking action. For example, The Associated Press reported that a Michigan councilwoman is considering a measure that would fine a person \$500 for playing pornography while driving. In Tennessee, a bill recently passed in the state Senate that would expressly prohibit the playing of obscene films with screens that are visible to other drivers, according to USA Today.

Of course, some will be uncomfortable with any sort of government intervention on this issue. Some might specifically have problems with some of the language used in proposed laws addressing this problem. For example, regarding the Tennessee bill, some might ask, "What exactly defines 'obscene?'" Some mainstream Hollywood films and television

shows display ever-increasing amounts of nudity. Certainly someone shouldn't be arrested for allowing "NYPD Blue" to entertain his passengers, one could argue. Right now, the defini-

tion of offensive material should be left to police officers. Most times, authorities will display proper discretion as they did in the Gainey example.

Another issue that might arise is whether statutes created to deal with pornography on the road might be expanded to include films depicting especially violent acts. It is arguable that accidentally seeing realistically brutal violence might be just as offensive as viewing explicit sexual behavior. This type of nuance will eventually work itself out, but only after the big problem of drivers making material that is obviously X-rated visible to other vehicles is properly addressed.

To properly deal with this issue, ordinances that discourage such behavior must be created. Although the inside of one's vehicle is generally regarded as private space, that distinction becomes irrelevant once one engages in an activity that could negatively affect other drivers. Andrea Carlton, a 26-year-old mother who witnessed someone playing a pornographic film in another car while driving with her 4-year-old daughter put it best. Carlton told the AP, "Just like there's no windows in a strip club, you shouldn't be able to see inside windows in a car when they're watching X-rated movies."

It's not a secret that Americans are already too distracted while driving. However, while some driving activities, such as eating, putting on makeup and reading the newspaper will only distract the driver stupid enough to attempt them, the practice of playing X-rated DVDs has the potential to distract drivers in other cars. Therefore, special attention on this matter is warranted. Quite frankly, it is embarrassing that this problem needs to be addressed at all. But to make the already chaotic streets of America a bit saner, the government must act on this issue with alacrity.



Collins Ezeanyim is a senior computer engineering major. Graphic by Paul Wilson

MAIL CALL

Ludacris concert didn't live up to advertisement

In response to the April 1 Ludacris concert:

After returning from the Ludacris concert Thursday, I felt so sad. Don't get me wrong, the concert was great, but I felt deceived.

I enjoy Ludacris just as much as the next man, but honestly, I was not going to go to the concert so I could get some studying done. Being a psychotic Chingy fan, I rushed to get my ticket that cost almost \$30. I waited anxiously for the entire concert in hopes that he would run out and surprise us, but alas, my dear Chingy was no where in sight. I almost cried when the DJ said it was over.

The thing is, the MSC Town Hall Web site said that Chingy was the special guest performer, and that was false advertisement. That was THE ONLY reason I went and the sole reason for me to purchase my ticket. I just wanted to express how disappointed I am that it was not true, and next time MSC Town Hall should make sure it has the correct acts listed. All in all, when I left, I felt that it was all a very cruel April Fool's joke.

Onyinyechi Okoro
Class of 2006

VIP program only meant to increase diversity

In response to an April 1 mail call:

Mr. Fisher, both you and Mr. Maddox miss the point of the VIP program completely. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled last year that diversity was an important issue in higher education. Rather than use race-based admissions, President Gates sought to increase diversity at TAMU through other means. He instituted scholarships, created recruitment programs, and proposed other initiatives.

In the speech he gave on Dec. 3, 2003, he also mentioned a specific problem: "... Currently, only 44 percent of African-American, 48 percent of Hispanic and 33 percent of Asian-American students we admit actually enroll as students here. This contrasts with 62 percent of white students who are admitted and then enroll."

The VIP program has been developed to fix this problem. To complain, then, that it

hurts white students, or that white applicants deserve the same treatment, misses the point. Of course, it would be nice if all admitted students could benefit from the program. But, with the budget situation as it is, that is not practical. Right now, the VIP program is open to those who need it most.

Besides, your brother, Mr. Fisher, seems too intelligent to base his decision on whether or not to come to A&M on such a minor issue like the VIP program.

Midhat Farooqi
Class of 2004

McCaig, Hernandez go with McAdams for SBP

We, Mark McCaig and Royd Hernandez, would like to thank those of you who supported us during the recent student body presidential elections. While we were not successful, we will continue to advocate the ideas we ran on in order make Texas A&M even greater.

That being said, Will McAdams is the only candidate in the runoff for SBP who will put an end to the "social club" atmosphere that has taken over student government. Will has the leadership experience as well as the desire to put the SGA back in the hands of the student body. He has made it clear that changes to improve the quality of student representation will take place if he becomes elected.

Will is also the only candidate who has been willing to take firm stands on issues of importance to the student body such as parking, traditions and communication. His willingness to speak his mind and take action is admirable as well as necessary to be an effective student leader.

On April 7 and 8, we will be voting for Will McAdams for student body president. We encourage our fellow Aggies to do the same.

Mark McCaig
Class of 2005

Royd Hernandez
Class of 2005

Battalion coverage of Rip Torn disappointing

When I picked up my copy of The Battalion last Friday, I was more than disappointed to see the reporting priorities for our campus. At the very bottom of the page was a relatively small image of the actor Rip Torn, Class of 1952,

reciting verse from a first edition of Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass." The purpose of the reading on Thursday was to celebrate the Whitman work as the three millionth acquisition of the Sterling C. Evans Library.

The image placement was disappointing, but more so because there was no extended story about the event. Texas A&M is one of the nation's leading universities in numerous fields with regard to research and creativity. Students need to recognize that these research and creativity components are the lifeblood of our university; moreover, students should take full advantage of these experiences during their education. The University libraries often play a vital role in any research and creativity experience and, in the future, students should be made more aware of these unique happenings associated with the University.

Josh Peschel
Class of 1998

Not all Muslims are affiliated with al-Qaida

In response to Nicholas Davis' March 19 column:

The American media has a tendency to attach the name of Islam to terrorist groups that carry out actions against the religious beliefs of the Islamic faith.

Heard that argument before? Sure, we all have, but nonetheless the media keeps doing it. The estimated size of al-Qaida is anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand people. The number of Muslims in the world is 1.4 billion people. You do the math!

It is really very simple. Blaming Muslims for the acts of al-Qaida, would be analogous to blaming Christians for the acts of Serbian forces, IRA, Basque and other groups. Let us remember that Serbian forces massacred, not too long ago, well over 100,000 Albanian civilians. Way, way more than all recent terrorist acts combined. Is that what their religion teaches them? Of course not!

As regards to Israeli actions, I wonder how you could consider the recent killing of over 700 and injuring (mainly through live ammunition) of over 28,000 Palestinian children an act of self defense (note I said children, not all Palestinians). I would like to end with the following quote to show how similar quotes can be found on both sides and at the end of the day will not help bring any solution. "We have to kill all the Palestinians unless they are

resigned to live here as slaves." — Heilbrunn, the chairman of the Committee of the Re-election of General Shlomo Lahat, the mayor of Tel Aviv.

Hassan Jaffer
graduate student

Battalion's choice of photos is undesirable

In response to an March 31 sci-tech article:

Although Amelia wrote a great article, I was not pleased with The Battalion's picture. But, sadly, I am not surprised. I was hoping to use the article for our required outreach part of our project; however, I do not feel that it would be appropriate to do that now.

The choice of pictures in The Battalion never ceases to amaze me. I do not understand why the unique and exciting images of real Aggies having real-life experiences were replaced with some cheap cartoon. I personally did not mind at first until fellow engineers and students started to joke about it.

It now makes our project look like a joke, which is something I am starting to take offense at.

I am not sure what can be done to change things since the article has already been written. Many times I see a random picture on the front page or somewhere else in The Battalion that has no related story. I am usually fine with these pictures as long as they relate to Aggie life.

If the pictures from the NASA Web site were used in such a manner, they could still inspire other students. If this were to happen, the Texas A&M teams could

take some justice from this act. Thanks on behalf of the Texas A&M KC-135 teams.

Grant Kemper
Team Leader
WSW KC-135 Team



North Siders can't eat without making a mess

I was personally offended today when a group of 30 North Siders decided to eat in the Commons Dining Room. They found it necessary to recite their juvenile rhyme about how close-knit they are and how the food we South Siders eat is less than quality.

They went too far by not using plates, but slopping their food directly onto the trays, throwing things off the tables and onto the floor, and taking parts of an Easter display and throwing them around at one another. The hardworking employees do not deserve to clean up an unnecessary mess made by a rowdy bunch of rude people who think that their actions make them Red-ass. If you think you're closer because a rhyme says it, fine. If you think it's tragic we live on South Side, fine. But if those of you involved in this sort of infantile act think you're representing Old Army or the Aggie Spirit, you're wrong.

Shannon King, Krueger Hall
Class of 2007

