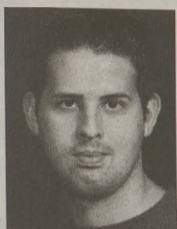


A time to kill

Considering threat of terrorism, assassination must be accepted as political tool

The recent assassinations of Hamas leaders Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Abdel Aziz Rantisi have been met with passionate, if mixed, feelings from people around the world. It's no secret that both men led a terrorist organization responsible for the deaths of thousands of innocent victims, but with Israel setting its sights on Yasser Arafat next, many are questioning the legitimacy of assassination in the first place. But assassination is a necessary evil, a political tool that is sometimes necessary to bring down evil rulers, and world leaders should start embracing it.



MIKE WALTERS

"Disgusting" is obviously an aesthetic matter, but it's not one that can form the basis for a moral condemnation. Most surgery and child-births could be described as "disgusting," yet mark the continuation of human life. Assassinations are obviously meant to end human life, yet the implementation of justice by the forces of good against evil can certainly be a beautiful thing.

Many Americans have a problem making that distinction, but this is a problem that must be solved if the United States is to successfully wage a war against terrorism. The fact is, if Americans cherish their way of life and love the values that make it good, then anyone who seeks to destroy it through murders and bombings must be properly recognized as evil.

In his speech at Texas A&M this past Friday, Hans Blix spoke of counting the costs of the war in Iraq and measured both the lives of U.S. soldiers and Iraqis together as negatives. This type of equivocation — the lives of U.S. soldiers and those of the men who killed them — is a dangerous land of moral grayness that renders one incapable of identifying who the enemy is. If one cannot first identify evil, then he is powerless to combat it.

The Israeli assassinations are legitimate methods of fighting the evil men who prey upon their innocent civilians for their own terrorist goals. Israeli Prime

Minister Ariel Sharon told Israel's Haaretz newspaper that "anyone who kills a Jew or harms an Israeli citizen or sends someone to kill Jews, is a marked man. Period."

Sharon has a clear vision of who he must fight and recognizes his right to defend himself against those who seek his death and the death of the people he has sworn to lead and protect. While many Palestinians believe they are merely doing the same thing, the distinction between the deliberate targeting of civilians by terrorist means and the surgical strike of terrorist leaders must be made. And since Israel allows for freedom of speech and of the press, religion and the right to private property, Americans should stand by Israel as a country that shares their own values.

Israel must be allowed to defend itself, and assassination is a valid instrument of doing so. And while terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah are crying for blood over the recent incidents, people should keep in mind that when the bad guys get mad, something's being done right.

Mike Walters is a senior psychology major. Graphic by Chris Griffin



University handled editorial improperly

Confiscating papers a poor decision

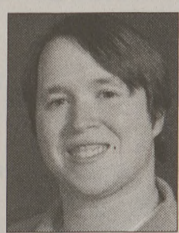
The extent to which a person's free speech rights extend is often a subject of debate. On April 18, La Roche College, a private Roman Catholic college in Pittsburgh, Pa., with an enrollment of less than 2,000, hosted an open house event for parents and prospective students. What made this event more exciting than usual was that the day before, security personnel removed approximately 900 copies of The La Roche Courier, the college's newspaper, to keep parents from reading an editorial in the current issue.

This act has been decried as "censorship" by some, but this is too harsh a label. The actions of the college were, however, thoughtless and unnecessary.

So what was the column about, and why did the school wish to keep parents from reading it? Editor in Chief Nicole Johnson was upset that, even though pamphlets could be found on campus giving instructions on where to drop off unwanted children so that they could be taken care of by others, the school had

done nothing to prevent unplanned pregnancies via means of condoms and other contraceptive methods. La Roche officials were afraid the column might send the wrong impression in regards to the university's stance on the use of contraceptives since the column is at odds with the school's religious values. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported that Ken Service, vice president for institutional relations, said, "On campus, people are familiar with the student newspaper and would recognize that this particular column was an individual's opinion and not reflective of an institutional position. There was concern that parents of prospective students might not recognize that."

Was Johnson being "censored?" Absolutely not. First of all, the column had been available for three days prior to the removal of the papers. About 600 students



CODY SAIN

had already picked up a paper and could have read the article. So, had the school not wanted anyone to read it simply for what it said, action would have been taken sooner.

However, just like Service said, the goal was to avoid sending prospective students and their parents the wrong impression about the school. Although students would still be able to read and discuss the article, the school's image would be protected.

Despite all of this, the school's actions were not justified. It is true that Johnson should have known she was entering dangerous territory when she decided to write a column that challenges Catholic moral teachings at a Catholic school, but rather than confiscating unread newspapers, a statement could have been made at the open house.

According to the La Roche Web site, the open house began with a welcome by David McFarland, assistant vice president for academic affairs. At that time, when all attending were gathered, the issue could have been addressed. This would have prevented the resulting controversy and could have sparked discussing among parents and their children.

It is ironic, though, that the school's administrators' actions have probably hurt the school's image more than they protected it. The leaders of the Catholic church have made mistakes in the past by trying to censor books and the theater. Time and again such actions have proven to cause the opposite of the desired effect. Discussion and reason must be the means by which truth is ascertained; covering up issues never does anything to solve them.

Cody Sain is a junior philosophy major.

MAIL CALL

There are legitimate reasons for inconsistency in drop fees

In response to Mike Walters April 23 column:

As an owner of one of the referenced "tow companies in College Station," I feel the need to clarify misinformation in Mr. Walters' article.

As stated in the College Station Code of Ordinances, a "drop" is when a tow truck that has connected to a vehicle for towing releases the vehicle to its owner upon payment of the drop fee, except when the vehicle is being taken into custody by an officer. A vehicle is connected if it is at least partially attached to the tow truck or when skates/dollies have been placed under the vehicle. A vehicle is not connected if the tow truck is merely backed up to the vehicle.

The article stated that the two companies involved were contacted about their policies. What about the other 16 in town? Did you contact them to see if all of their policies are the same?

Tow companies who provide non-consent tows are regulated by the city ordinances of both College Station and Bryan. The maximum fees listed in the ordinances are just that, maximum fees. There is nothing in the ordinance that states we have to charge the maximum. As for the differences in "drop fees," since a majority of the local tenants are students, I've made arrangements with management companies to offer discounted fees as in a \$20 drop fee versus the \$40 unless the owner becomes belligerent, then I have every right to charge them the "maximum" fees allowed.

This may be the reason for the difference in

prices, but not many companies offer this type of discount. Would you rather pay a \$20-\$40 drop fee or the \$111.24 if it is taken to the storage yard?

The ordinances also state that a receipt must be provided to owners at the time of payment. If you do not receive a receipt, ask for one. If they don't give you one, you can contact Code Enforcement and voice a complaint with the officer who is in charge of wrecker service enforcement. This requirement also takes care of the driver pocketing money comment when the tickets and money have to be turned in and accounted for.

As for only being parked for five minutes, we for the most part, are unaware of how long you are parked in a location. Companies are contracted to tow any and all vehicles that are parked without stickers or in the wrong area. It is our job to ensure that there is parking for their tenants. It is the tenants' responsibility to ensure that their guests are parked in their designated areas.

Jennifer A. Swartz
Owner, J.A.G.S Rescue & Recovery, LLC
& PETE office assistant

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

