

'God Squad' seeks to circumvent law

The original was the "Mod Squad." Then came "Police Squad," a hilarious parody spoof. Now we have the "God Squad," except this time, things aren't so funny.

Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan Jr. has the power to convene a seven-member committee that can override the Endangered Species Act. For only the third time in history, the so-called God Squad will come to life — and because of it, the northern spotted owl is facing extinction once again.

At the request of the Bureau of Land Management, Lujan called the committee to judge whether BLM can resume logging on 4,570 acres. BLM officials claim that if they are not allowed to log the tracts, timber harvests on Oregon's BLM land could fall by as much as 75 percent, costing tens of thousands of jobs in the Pacific Northwest.

The official powers that be just don't quit. When the Fish and Wildlife Service set aside millions of acres of the Northwest's old growth for the spotted owl, environmentalists cheered and loggers fumed. And now the Bush ("Call me the environmental president") administration is showing its selective green thumb once again. Environmental issues are good until they get in the way of that steamroller called "progress" — which is often. Then watch how green the administration is.

Proponents of the God Squad say the size of the affected land is such a small percentage of the protected old growth, that a yes decision to log the tracts wouldn't make that much difference to the survival of the spotted owl.

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Perhaps, but what is at stake is much more than just 4,570 acres. The possible extinction of the spotted owl pales when matched against the real issue — the survival of our old growth forests.

Environmentalists must take a stand, and this is the place and issue to do it. A message must be sent that Oregonians want to protect their forests. Yes, it is only 4,570 acres, but the largest journeys start with one step. If Bush and Co. are allowed to make even a slight inroad into the old growth protection, it will be nigh impossible to stop them the next time.

People in the timber industry have a right to be upset. Their livelihoods could very well hinge on the God Squad's decision. But Oregon can no longer rely on timber products to cornerstone the state's economy. By downscaling the industry, eventually a happy medium between environmentalists and loggers will be reached — a stable place where our old growth forests won't disappear.

The move from a timber-based economy to one of light-industry and technology is a necessary and painful one. The displaced timber workers must be retrained for other jobs. That will take money and effort, and right now, Oregon politicians don't seem to be supplying either.

It's not just 4,570 acres of old growth at stake; it's the future economic viability of the state. Either Oregonians will face reality and change the base of the economy or they will ignore the flashing warning signs and watch the old growth and timber jobs dwindle away.



LETTERS

T.V. guide

It was painfully easy for me to see through Jerod Hume's pitiful attempt to promote *Our Version of Hell* through base trickery (*ODE*, Oct. 2). Even if I was not one of Hume's fellow cast members on the show, I would have seen through his wicked game.

Hume — do you not realize just how intelligent the average University student is? I doubt a single student fell for your "angry liberal" facade? Isn't it far better to be straightforward and respectful by just telling the student body that *Our Version of Hell* is a swank comedy show on every Thursday at 10:20 on Cable 11?

Shame. Shame. Shame on Hume.

Bryce Ingman
Student

Don't swallow

I have a bone to pick with the way this administration treats its students. When Duck Call allowed roughly half of the student body to register early, resulting in a horrid Mac Court registration experience, I sighed and swallowed my frustration. When they charged me \$866 for a term of higher education, I sighed and swallowed my frustration.

But while in my 9:30 a.m. class in 150 Columbia, I couldn't find the space in my throat to swallow. The administration conveniently decided to allow construction on the roof

of 150 Columbia during my class, resulting in constant hammering and drilling. My professor had to dismiss class because many students couldn't hear his lectures.

I pay the second-highest tuition of any public school in the western United States. With \$866 per term and five classes in my schedule, that's \$173.30 per class. When I miss 20 minutes of class due to someone's miscalculation, I feel cheated and ripped off! I should not have to deal with the B.S. that this administration shells out to me and every other student at this University.

It clearly showed, through the Mac Court experience, that the administration had some severe organizational problems. If they can't coordinate loud construction around one class, I don't feel very confident in giving them close to \$900 a term for their underdeveloped administrative skills!

Dirk Barnett
Pre-Journalism

Duped

This letter is in response to the one written by Jerod Hume (*ODE*, Oct. 2).

I can't say I agree or disagree with Hume on the social worth of *Our Version of Hell* because I have never watched it. But even if it is wretched (which it probably is), why is it always the "joyous, rainbow, brotherly-loving liberals" that want to "unite" and "disband" things?

I consider (or considered)

myself a liberal, but I have no interest in uniting with people who are exactly like me in dress and belief, and proceed to "disband" that which is different. What about diversity? What about the evils of censorship? Is not television that art of the masses? Other wretched television serves a useful artistic purpose ... like *Married, with Children*, sexist and exaggeratingly shallow; anyone who takes this parody serious enough to want to censor it is clearly missing the point.

I heard a man say the other morning, "Tunnel vision is everywhere." It has taken me these four years in Eugene to realize the enormous hypocrisy of the liberalism in this city. Eugene liberalism is really only alternative conservatism. Conservative in the sense of sameness, uniform, shop at the same stores, only see certain films or read certain material, those that are different are feared, not trusted or targeted for censorship.

Also there is the tendency to want safety in numbers (unite). The word "unite" indicates exclusion by its meaning, not diversity.

I don't know; maybe all of this simply takes about four years to realize ... but in the meantime I think everybody should relax and accept the diversity that tries to exist in this cramped environment.

Russelle Eyre
Student

