

Noriega trial was simply for show

Like the Canadian Mounties of old, the Bush administration finally got its man. The only question is ... was it worth it?

Last Thursday, a Miami jury found former Panamanian dictator Gen. Manuel Noriega guilty on eight counts of cocaine trafficking, money laundering and racketeering. The 14-member jury, which haggled for five days and was at one time dangerously close to deadlock, threw out two other charges.

Noriega's conviction ends a saga that began nearly five years ago. First there was a diplomatic crisis when Noriega wouldn't accede to then-President Reagan's wishes. Next came the U.S. invasion of Panama, which deposed Noriega and put him on trial. Now, the guilty verdict.

From this corner, there is little doubt that Noriega was guilty as sin. The evidence was there and was nearly overwhelming. But what the jury apparently didn't consider, and what the defense attorneys proved with equal vigor, was that Noriega, for most of his political career, was a patsy and front man for the United States.

For years, Noriega was on the CIA payroll. The United States saw him as a staunch ally in Central America — leader of a valuable country with a long canal running through it. He was but one dictator we supported.

However, times change, and like Saddam Hussein found out, the U.S. government has a nasty habit of turning on former dictatorial buddies when the political climate cools. When Noriega was no longer valuable, and he began to thumb his nose at them, he was a goner.

The 1989 invasion killed several hundred Panamanians, 23 American soldiers and did more than \$1 billion damage to a country already staggering under the economic chaos of the Noriega regime. There is no telling how much the seven-month trial cost the taxpayers.

And it might all be for naught. The grounds for appeal in this case are staggering. Illegal seizure, U.S. violation of Noriega's lawyer-client privilege, a possible prisoner of war status — these are all assertions Noriega's defense has brought up for questioning. This is prime material for an appellate court.

The worst thing about the Noriega trial was the hypocrisy. Bush, who ordered the invasion, was simply looking for some tangible evidence that he was "fighting the drug war." Noriega's conviction will do nothing to stop the drug trade. Cocaine has come across the American borders unabated by his incarceration. It was all just for show.



LETTERS

Snooze alarm

Dear snoozing students:
It seems some of you have gotten the EMU confused with your bedrooms. Annoyingly, often when we try to find a quiet place to study, such as the International Lounge or the Tom Taylor Memorial Lounge, there is nowhere to sit. Not because it is jam-packed with studying students, but because it is occupied by snoozing students, some of who think it is their living room and take off their shoes.

I'm sorry! It is inconsiderate. They take up whole couches. Why not try sleeping sitting up so others can study by you? We have the consideration not to wake you, so now have some for us and scoot over!

Michelle Balzola
Gayle Forman
Students

Cuts hurt

As a student for whom English is a second language and who often stands behind the scenes and studies the issues, I rarely go into the public eye to express my views. However, angered by Joseph Wong's letter (ODE, April 6), I am forced to make my views understood.

No one cares more about diversity, ASUO services and free seats to home games more than I. I have signed the petition because I feel all students should have the opportunity to make their feelings heard.

The 10 percent cut will hurt, but for the sake of argument, we must consider the increased efficiency of the multiplying bureaucracy. We must 1) put students back into student programs and services, 2) replace stipends with work study/internship opportunities, and most importantly 3) let individuals who have genuine concerns for the student body lead!

The 10 percent from one individual doesn't matter much; however, from 16,000 students, the Incidental Fee Committee may suffer a bullet wound. How fast this wound heals depends on the efficiency of the allocations. I am in support of

and willing to pay more for a more efficient, more accountable, and more personable government.

It's time for us to end these bureaucratic games of politics and get serious at re-evaluating opportunity costs that go into public goods and to free-riders. Don King and Holly Ferguson have done just that: They have opened the iron-curtain setup between the IFC and ASUO executives to try to work together.

Vote not from what the so-called politician promises, but vote from what she or he has accomplished. Please join me in studying the issues at hand and casting votes in the primary and general elections, and show that we students still care.

Tri Huu Bui
Political science

Dysfunctional

Are homosexuals a product of recruitment or genetic predisposition? There are persuasive arguments for both sides. Personally, I believe inherited homosexuality is an oxymoron, but that's not the point. How society should regard dysfunctional behavior should not be determined by whether or not it is inherited.

Homosexuality has many similarities to alcoholism. Homosexual behavior, just as the behavior of alcoholism (which many consider to be inherited), is dysfunctional and highly injurious to the individual, the family unit, and society. Morality completely aside, this bodily destructiveness is clearly evident in terms of vastly increased health care requirements and drastically reduced life expectancy for both alcoholics and homosexuals.

We do no kindness to the alcoholic by endorsing or legitimizing their dysfunctional behavior. So homosexual behavior shouldn't be embraced by society as an acceptable model for human behavior. Certainly we would do a disservice to the nation's children by telling them homosexuality is standard behavior.

Just as alcoholics, homosexu-

als should be the subject of our benevolence; not to accept or legitimize their conduct, but rather to assist the person to become a more functional and constructive member of society.

The most effective way we can prevent government from institutionalizing homosexuality as normal and acceptable behavior is by signing Oregon Citizens Alliance's initiative petition and then voting "yes" on their ballot measure this fall. This is not "mean-spirited," "hateful," or any other thesaurus derivation. Quite the contrary; it is the responsible and loving thing to do.

Jon Wollander
Eugene

Mistruths

I usually don't involve myself with the politics of student government, but after reading the flyer Don King and Holly Ferguson have been distributing to greeks, I felt some mistruths needed to be rectified.

As a greek student and an ASUO intern of a greek executive member, it's clear King and Ferguson's statement that greeks are "ignored by student government" is not true. They also state there is a "lack of student government support" for greek students, but the fact is that more than half of the ASUO staff is made up of greek students. In addition, the ASUO is currently working with greeks in battling the effects of Measure 5.

They claim greek students "are in danger!" I agree greeks are in danger, but only if they believe King and Ferguson's desperate scare tactics. King even verbally promised he would hire an entire staff of greek students.

I certainly hope if I was to be hired to an executive staff, it would be because of my experience and abilities and not because of my associations.

William Peabody
Student

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