

Hanging justified for Dodd's crimes

On Tuesday, Washington prison officials hanged child-killer Westley Allan Dodd. Death penalty opponents decried the execution, claiming his hanging constituted cruel and unusual punishment. Several questions arose.

Was the death penalty warranted? Does the death penalty actually accomplish anything? And was hanging a just punishment?

Realistically, hanging is not the most gentle method of death. Washington state, where Dodd was executed, also offers lethal injection, a more humane option. Dodd, however, chose the former.

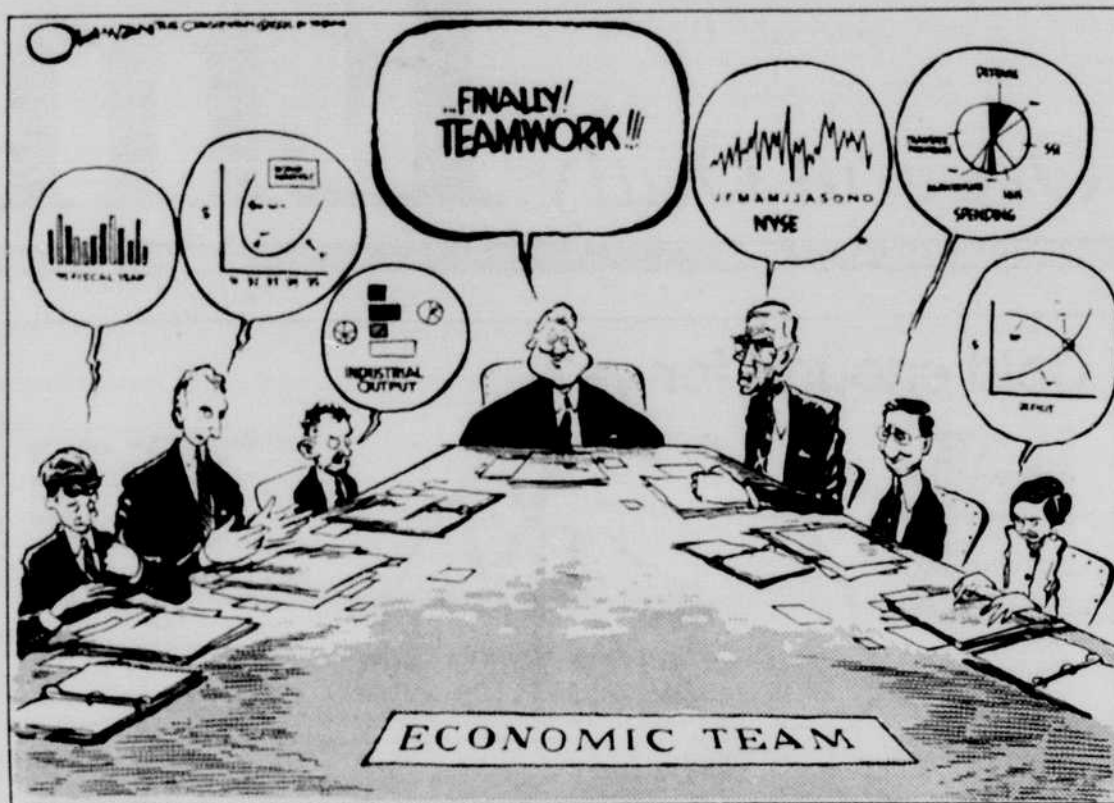
By any argument, the cruel part of his punishment had little to do with the manner he died. According to an autopsy of Dodd's body, he probably lost consciousness as soon as he hit the end of the rope, suffering little or no pain. At most, Dodd would have suffered a few minutes.

The cruelty of the death penalty relates more to telling a death row inmate the exact date and time of death. If a condemned man knows he is to die in two years, the two years spent thinking about the death are far crueler than the actual killing itself. If Dodd spent only a minute suffering in pain, he spent far more than that in emotional suffering.

Whether or not the death penalty itself is justifiable is a tougher question. Giving a state the right to kill makes it extremely powerful. Innocent people have been sentenced to death in the past, and it probably will happen again. In addition, death sentences often take years to settle, with the state spending taxpayer money to conduct prisoner appeals.

But for a multiple murderer, there isn't really another punishment to fit the crime. People often argue that two wrongs don't make a right — killing the murderer won't bring back the first victim. But if someone were to kill your child, would you prefer another solution? It's far easier to oppose the death penalty if the crime doesn't affect you personally. But when it does, nothing else makes sense.

Dodd committed a vicious crime and deserved death. He molested and killed three young boys, and confessed he would have killed more if he were ever released. Life imprisonment would have accomplished little, and because his choice was hanging, the method was justifiable.



LETTERS

Recognition

An official University committee on multicultural curriculum has arrogated itself the right to decide who is a "Kosher ethnic" student and who is not. In the members' narrow, biased and ignorant view, Jews, Arabs and other ethnic minorities simply don't exist.

My own ethnic community, which has existed for 3,800 years, makes up approximately 7 percent of the student body. It is unconscionable and grim irony to me that in the name of multiculturalism, this University committee would deny my people and others our very identity and existence.

We will not be silent. They will not define us. We are here. I invite my brothers and sisters of other ethnic communities similarly discounted to speak up as well.

My own Jewish civilization did not make its last contribution thousands of years ago, but is very much alive today. By offering courses in Judaica and other cultures, we can begin dispelling misconceptions and learn sensitivity to the ways we are different — not merely tolerant of the fact of our differences.

The accumulated wisdom of our diverse cultures has much to teach us about the success and survival of the human race. I challenge the University to develop an inclusive environment and curriculum that encourages true multicultural diversity and awareness, and not continue its usual policies, insensitivity and apathy toward minorities.

Hanan Sills
Director
Hillel Foundation

Middle East

I would like to reiterate a complaint initiated earlier this year by Dr. Reza Behnam — a complaint that has thus far been ignored by the administration: The absence of courses on the languages, cultures and politics of the Middle East.

I believe the University has been neglectful in denying students the opportunity to learn about a part of the world that is home to so many millions of people and has significant importance on an international level.

The fact that such courses are absent from the University does not necessarily mean that the student body is apathetic in this regard. I for one would have gladly enrolled in a course in Persian, Arabic or Hebrew if even one such course existed.

Eric Nissani
Spanish

WAX local

With regret, I heard the KWAX Christmas announcement about dropping the program, "St. Paul Sunday Morning." One can't argue when the change is based on financial problems, as this one is.

Still, it's unfortunate KWAX

thereby moves one step further into the jungle of depersonalized network music. Granted, "St. Paul Sunday Morning" is a network product; but it had a personal touch for KWAX listeners, as the host is a one-time conductor of the Eugene Symphony, Bill McGlaughlin.

The classical sound I savor becomes one-dimensional and redundant when local programming is absent. There's a way to mitigate that by using expert faculty of the University, both in and out of music. They should comment on events relevant to their expertise on a lively weekly interview show.

This positive change of pace in sound would recognize merits of some of our campus specialists. It also would fulfill some of the public service responsibilities implicit on a campus having the privilege of a public radio outlet, and that are not currently served at the University.

It could be achieved with only one 60-minute weekend period out of the week's 168 broadcast hours. It would revive a sound that — except for the freshness of Caitriona Bolster's voice and understanding — now is personally sterile.

George Beres
Eugene

Emerald

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