

Monson case shows juries can be flawed

American judicial tradition affords great respect for juries. The idea of a dozen disparate individuals from different walks of life coming together to do their civic duty and render a legally binding decision ... it sends chills down the patriot's spine.

But the jury that awarded former Oregon basketball coach Don Monson \$300,000 in damages last week proves the system is not without its flaws.

In the world of Division I basketball, the firing of coaches who don't get the job done is a common occurrence. Do you ever wonder why the coaches of high-profile teams look like they're about to spontaneously combust every time their players commit a minor mistake? It's because they know they can be replaced. And they will be, if the wins stop coming.

Monson enjoyed a period of decidedly lackluster success at Oregon, which may or may not have been his fault. When he was finally removed from his head-coaching position (and subsequently reassigned within the athletic department), it shouldn't have been a surprise to anyone who follows basketball.

But Monson's lawyer, Harold Gillis, argued that Monson was entitled not only to the salary that remained on his contract extension, but also the income he would've received as a side benefit of his employment as basketball coach — income from Nike, summer basketball camps and the Oregon Sports Network.

Monson may have been counting on this extra income, but it was not supported by his written contract with the University. How then can the University be held liable for it?

OK, maybe it wasn't fair to take away Monson's head coaching job. And maybe it was a little on the humiliating side to be reassigned as golf coach. Well, cry me a river.

The fundamental truth of major collegiate sports is this: Winning is everything. Maybe that isn't fair, either, but that doesn't make it any less true. Other sports depend on the success of football and men's basketball to subsidize them. If Monson couldn't pack 'em in The Pit anymore, then the University had a responsibility to replace him — for the fans, the players and the other athletes.

The jury in this case was obviously not familiar with the realities of college basketball. Granted, Monson deserved some compensation for his rather abrupt reassignment (which no one should have realistically expected him to accept), but \$300,000 is excessive. Certain risks are inherent in being a head basketball coach at a major university. Monson had to know that. The jury, however, did not.

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LETTERS

Oaks choked

I'd like to comment on the "Biblical Bull" letter (ODE, Oct. 11). First of all, if David Oaks was trying to offend me or any other Christian, he failed miserably. What he did was betray his own ignorance and prove to us he has no idea what "rational investigation" really is.

He says he is tolerant of religions. His proof? "My ancestors in Lithuania practiced a religion," he said. This does not follow rationally. Oaks' tolerance has nothing to do with his ancestors' actual beliefs. Nietzsche's father was a Lutheran pastor; it didn't follow that Nietzsche himself was religiously tolerant.

Secondly, what he claims is a "pile of bullshit" may be true or may not be; those things are a matter of faith. A religion's claim of miracles is outside scientific investigation. What is open to rational examination is the religion's ethics and world view. Look into those. (By the way, Christ never claimed to be drinking his own blood. He should get his story straight before judging a religion.)

I agree that what happened to Jung Sook Jang is really a crime — a barbarous subjection to scientific method contrary to all human dignity. But what does that have to do with Christianity? Oaks himself said she was brought to "the psychiatric system," not to a church.

Further, we all kill Mother Earth by our wanton consumption, not just Christians.

It would be nice if Christians did not become scapegoats for everybody's sins.

**Matt Fox
Greek**

Timber!

It is fascinating to note that the ludicrous "Option 9" of Bill Clinton's is supposed to bail out the timber workers and mill owners, yet it never even mentions the continued export of raw logs.

This was the real reason behind the starved mills, not environmentalists creating the shortage of logs. Now it turns out there is only old-growth ready to cut because they forgot to replant 40 years ago! Just whose fault is this anyway? Now the whole ecosystem of ancient trees will have to suffer and be used for lowly chips and pulp as well as a little milled lumber. With this low blow by our "environmental president," enviro-screams will continue.

The cut Clinton wants is based on the figures of the insane slaughter of the 1980s, which put us into the shape we are in now. This is "new forestry science" at work. Everyone is dissatisfied. All this energy and hope wasted over the last few months of negotiations ending in the president's coercion and blackmail of the environmental groups. Some caved in, some on principal are resisting.

**Hilde K. Cherry
Eugene**

Superior way

The recent article about head-in parking (ODE, Oct. 13) again underscores the lack of planning of the public safety department here at the University.

I could go on endlessly about the banal tickets issued and the debates that have transpired between myself and various security officers. That, however, would be a waste of time. This is a continuing problem that students, staff and faculty have had with the misplaced obsession that security has with painfully trivial infractions of automobile and bicycle laws.

These are the public safety opinions: First, it is convenient to monitor parking stickers. Second, it is safer to back out of a space than pull out forward. The logic is that it takes two lanes of traffic to pull out forward.

These are the facts: First, allow parking stickers to be on the front or rear bumper. If you park with the sticker toward the curb, you get a ticket. Second, it

is safer to park head-out since potential obstructions are significantly more visible to the driver.

In addition, it should require the same amount of space to make movements in and out of a parking space. We make the same movements — just in reverse order.

Now that I have stated the painfully obvious, I would like you all to know that I do not intend to change a safer way of parking a car for reasons that defy logic and understanding. Mine is a superior way.

**Lawrence Martin
Architecture**

Bad explanation

If you are not gay, this letter may bore or disgust you. But Monday's article (ODE, Oct. 11) on National Coming Out Day was written for you, once again, in an attempt to explain gay lifestyles to a straight population.

But that article, so condemning and safe, bored and disgusted me and many homosexuals on campus. Half of Page 9 was devoted to an article supposedly representing pride and a united community.

What it became was a page of no information. It had no strong message of being gay and proud. Maybe the author was so safe because she did try to be objective and non-offensive.

But I and several others were offended and once again felt patronized by people who think they understand. I was promised by the *Emerald* a clarification on several points in the article. If it was done it must have been small and buried under ads and comics. So I would like to apologize to my counterparts for talking with a paper who sugarcoated my words and whose article put very little power behind our day.

I am a lesbian and proud of it.
**Rachel Dueker
Student**

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