

Springfield officers acted appropriately

To serve and protect. That is the creed that police officers take to the streets with them each time their patrol cars leave the station. The power invested in them is the power to willfully protect, and they are fully trained to do so.

Of the 27 bullets that were fired at Joe Gene Barton, the Springfield man who was fatally shot by two Springfield police officers, only two were found to be the piercing shots that claimed his life. Of the 27 shots that were fired, only seven even impacted the man who was hiding under an outside deck. But this is real life, obviously not Hollywood.

Watching the latest *Lethal Weapon* or Van Damme movie, we see victim after victim falling to their hypothetical death with one bullet hitting them dead center. Police tactics are to restrain and minimize danger. However, in some cases there is no time to restrain, and the police officers in Springfield did minimize danger. When officers do perceive the danger of a situation relevant to gunfire, they are trained to shoot. Beyond the lights of Hollywood, statistics are on the side of the Springfield officers.

More than 90 percent of police shootings happen at a range within 10 feet. Police officers that do fire their guns actually land only 11 percent of their shots. The Springfield officers hit with 30 percent of their shots, let alone they were firing at Barton, who was concealed under an 18-inch-high outdoor deck. Furthermore, the police officers were 20 and 30 feet away.

Once Barton had dropped his gun, the officers stopped shooting. (They are trained to shoot until the threat ceases - until Barton dropped his gun.) Prematurely ceasing fire while Barton was still holding his gun could have resulted in shots fired at the officers or others in the area. Once the shooting had stopped, after Barton dropped his gun, he continued to struggle with emergency medical personnel. Barton had not barricaded himself, nor had he shown potential to compromise. He was warned numerous times to put down his gun and he did not. He was warned that he would be shot at if he did not put down his gun. He said shoot.

Many believe that bullets from a handgun are deadly no matter what. But a victim may not even know that they have been immediately hit, in the heat of an intense situation, if the wound is not life threatening. This fact, coupled with the notion that, although there are no toxicology and tissue reports available, there is the possibility that illegal drugs may have been a factor in the victim's bloodstream. The officers did discover drug paraphernalia when they searched Barton's possessions. If illegal drugs were a factor, this would further strengthen the argument that the police officers were within their constraints. Many drugs alter one's awareness, even to the point of not immediately recognizing a gunshot wound.

The police officers fired until Barton dropped his gun — his gun that was pointed at the officers. They used force that was necessary for the given situation. The alternatives offered little demise for different circumstances. The officers, although shooting 27 shots, shot as they were trained.



COMMENTARY

For Oregon's sake, fire Brooks

By David S. Bell

For years, the University has taken pride in what it has to offer its students and community.

We, as all institutions of reputation, seize opportunities to improve our campus and programs. Attracting some of the greatest minds in the country, our journalism, architecture and environmental law programs have evolved as national leaders, earning the respect of all who specialize in these professions. Our tradition has been one of growth, change and fearless pursuit of excellence.

This sometimes requires us to bid farewell to old ideas and faces, while welcoming the new. Although change is never easy, even when the problems are painfully obvious, we have acted in response to the need and gained from it.

The wheels of change must again be set in motion. Times of passive observance are no longer appropriate. It is time to face an unshakable shortcoming that has crippled our university for years. It is time to release the old arguments based on patience and indifference. It is time to embrace the undeniable reality of the thorn burning in our paw. It is time to face facts and act upon them. It is time to fire Rich Brooks.

No longer can the Oregon fans endure the Autzen Stadium walk of shame, knowing in our hearts

that we had the mettle to produce, if it hadn't been for the guidance of a fool. It is my opinion that Rich Brooks could do no more damage to Oregon if he were on the California payroll (which now may be open to debate).

It is my opinion that when our playbooks read as simply as *Cat in the Hat* — when coaching efforts result in repeated disappointment — we must turn elsewhere for our success. It is my opinion that when the crowd can forecast the Ducks' next offensive or defensive series with remarkable accuracy, when we produce great players but play average football, when Oregon has not dented the top 10 since Christ was a freshman — it is time for a change. It is my opinion that Rich Brooks is as much a strategist as Kelly Bundy.

You cannot argue with the statistics. You cannot argue with the overall and conference win-loss record. You cannot argue with unshakable figures — crying testimonies to his dismal and paralyzing contributions to the Oregon football program. I say that if Rich Brooks were to coach the Cowboys, they would lose to the cheerleaders. The numbers speak for themselves. Head coach for the Oregon Ducks football team is no charity, and any way you look at it, he has failed.

Let Rich Brooks and his staff champion mediocrity and weakness at some other school. We must say "Enough!" We must

usher in someone new and hungry for victory — somebody with the knowledge, leadership and drive it takes to produce a national football power. We, ourselves, must have the courage to acknowledge the painful truth that we should have acted on years ago. The numbers speak for themselves.

Or, maybe you would rather chew on another come-from-behind victory from Cal? Maybe you would rather cringe when the Ducks face the Huskies? Perhaps you would rather suck down another helping of bitter Civil War defeat? We must have the inspiration to let go of the outdated and failing, and seek out the new and potential. We must be guided by our error of passivity in order to bring about football seasons benefiting all Oregon athletes and students.

We, as alumni, faculty and students, must demand change to breathe the financial benefits of a Rose Bowl into those tiring and dwindling programs of our school. We have already seen the political remedies to our financial necessities in the form of 1990's Ballot Measure 5. We can no longer suffer. We can no longer suffer with his brilliant and creative displays of incapability. Sure, he may tend to grow on you, but so does cancer. It is time to cut free the anchor holding back the Oregon battleship and sail. Fire Brooks.

David S. Bell is a University alumnus, class of 1991.

LETTERS

God-Man

A response to Janet Cromwell's letter calling Christian support for Clinton's health care plan. Cromwell draws the incarnate God with socially responsible colored markers. Again Christ is a front, a super-aware advocate for abortion, gay rights, and now socialized medicine. She does not see that society is an entity opposed to the

God-Man.

Cromwell blinks and mutters, but neither sees nor utters true Christianity in her summons "to support health, wholeness and healing for all people." Where does she call for humility, repentance, asceticism, and central to this argument, rather than reliance on programs, welfare, society or charity to cure ills, injustice, and poverty? Christ's

miracles were metaphors for the soul repentant. Greed and inequity mar American health care; let Clinton's plan pass and be implemented, and perhaps there will be more justice. But shun the blasphemy of evoking Christ for schemes of societal progression. And Christians, turn to your prime end of spiritual perfection.

Andrew Shaffer
Eugene

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