

Obremski walked, now the NRA talks

The National Rifle Association seems to have found a productive way to wield its influence.

The NRA, for years a staunch opponent of gun-control laws and other "infringements" upon personal liberty, has ventured into the business of second-guessing prison parole boards, an arena in which the enormous bankroll and political clout of the NRA just might do some serious good.

That budget and clout is emerging in the form of Crimestrike, a division of the NRA whose main thrust seems to be keeping convicted criminals — particularly those with three or more violent crimes on their record — in jail and off the streets.

Crimestrike has taken advantage of the local climate against repeat offenders by taking aim at Russell Leon Obremski, a three-time felon who was arrested two weeks ago on charges of sodomizing a four-year-old girl.

Crimestrike took out a full-page ad on Page 5A of the Sunday *Register-Guard*, calling the Eugene man "vermin" and a "cold-blooded predator" and prominently displaying the man's police mug shot. The advertisement also implored citizens to call the former parole board chairman who was in charge of Obremski's case and asked them also to pledge their support for Oregon's "three strikes you're out" initiative.

If such a law had been in effect when Obremski was convicted of his first crime, the statutory rape of a 14-year-old in the late 1960s, he would not have been released from prison last November and would not have been able to commit the crimes of which he is now accused.

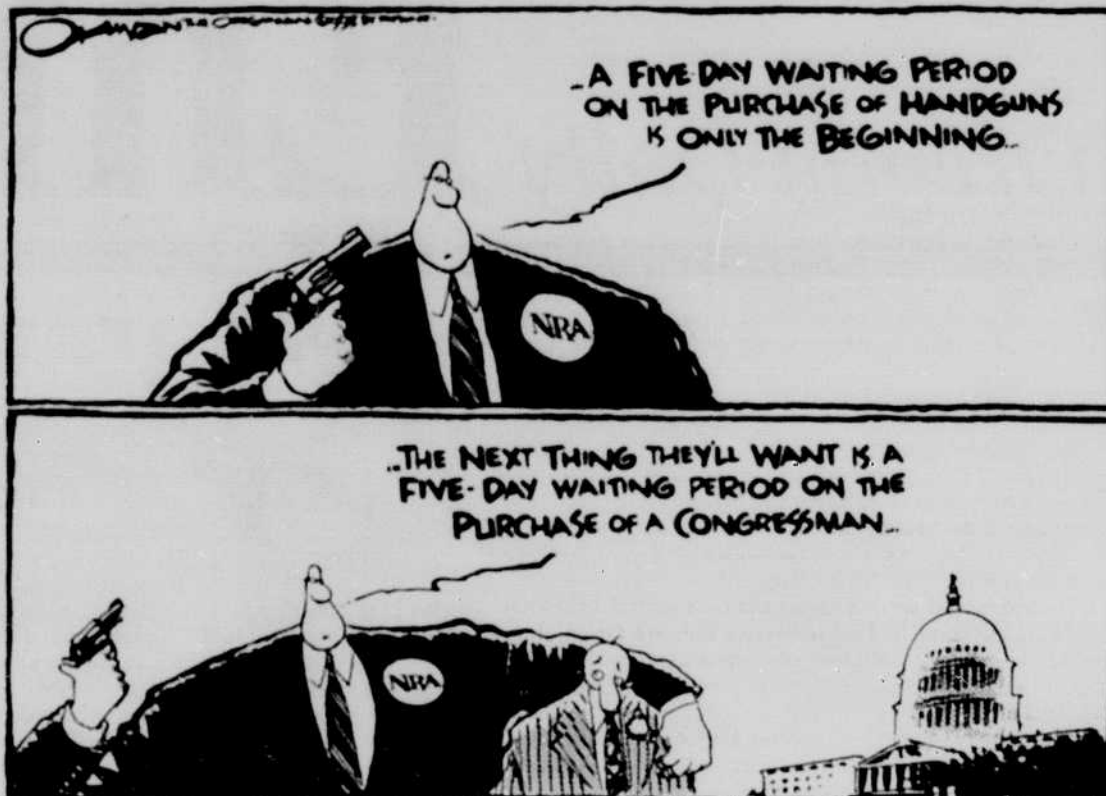
After serving only one year of a 20-year sentence for that rape, Obremski was released in 1969. Soon after he was free, he brutally murdered two women and was subsequently sentenced to two life terms as punishment.

Those three crimes should've been more than enough to keep Obremski locked up for good, but clearly they weren't.

So perhaps the time has come for Oregonians to support a "three strikes you're out" law. If the justice system can't be trusted to keep proven, dangerous criminals behind bars where they belong, then the citizenry should unite to force them to do so.

The headlines are full of cases where criminals are let out before they've paid their debt to society. The causes are myriad: overcrowded prisons, budget constraints, laws which reward good behavior with early parole, laws which fill prison space with drug offenders to the exclusion of violent criminals, or simply poor judgment on the part of parole boards. In any case, too many bad guys are getting out, and something needs to be done.

Although it may be a bitter pill for some Oregonians to take, uniting under a banner of the NRA, support for Crimestrike and "three strikes you're out" may be just what the doctor ordered. Cases like Obremski's prove that the "revolving door" of prisons has real victims — victims who can sometimes be just four years old.



COMMENTARY

Saferide is discriminating against men

By Stephen Crawford

Is Saferide sexist toward men? In her March 14 opinion piece in the *Emerald*, Lia Saliccia declares emphatically no. This point is certainly debatable. Does Saferide discriminate against men? The answer is unquestionably yes. Is Ms. Saliccia and people who share her skewed vision of men prejudiced? Again yes. Her last opinion piece of the winter term is loaded with the militant feminist rhetoric and venom that permeates most all of her previous articles.

First off, I must question what this article is about. Is it about whether men should or should not be allowed in Saferide vehicles? Or is it about Ms. Saliccia's warped perception of all men as potential rapists? Disregarding the examples she cites of "misdirected anger" by men toward Saferide vehicles and the explanatory paragraph immediately preceding it, because they are wholly irrelevant in this discussion. Ms. Saliccia's article has, arguably, six paragraphs discussing the Saferide conflict.

On the other hand, it also has seven, arguably eight, paragraphs on her own prejudiced, rhetoric-laden view of rape. Regardless of what she thinks, these two topics do not necessarily go together. Ms. Saliccia is merely injecting her own biased opinions on why all women are potential victims and why all men are insensitive, unthinking predators waiting for their kill. Many of her previous articles follow this same pattern: They start with a relatively legitimate argument then degenerate into her one-woman crusade against the tyranny of men.

Let me first address Ms. Saliccia's view that Saferide is not discriminatory. She states that "every time a woman walks alone at night, she is making a conscious decision to take the risk of sexual assault." And further in the same paragraph, "Men walk alone at night all of the time and rarely give attack a second thought." In my case, she is probably right. I am 6-foot-3 and weigh 262 pounds,

and in all likelihood I am not going to be attacked. However, all men are not are not my size, nor even close. For example, I have a friend who lives in the dorms and some of the men that live on the same floor as him could not be any larger than 5-foot-6 inches or 5-foot-7 and none probably weigh more than 140 pounds. Meaning no insult to these men, they are just as vulnerable to an attack as any woman.

As well, by saying that men have nothing to fear, you are completely discrediting hate crimes against homosexual men, as well as against men of color. Can you imagine the feeling of terror and helplessness of an openly gay man who is forced to walk across campus alone, because upon calling Saferide he was informed that because he is a man, he is on his own? Or how about an African-American man? Or an Asian man? Or a white man, who, because he has a penis, has to walk home alone at night even though he might feel seriously threatened? You are right about this point, Ms. Saliccia; women are more at risk of being attacked. However, that does not mean that we should judge, or more accurately, prejudice, just because a person is a male his needs are unimportant and trivial.

As far as your comments about rape, your ignorance and hatefulness might be excusable if it was not such a prevalent attitude among feminists. You claim that "it is the men who abuse their power as men in order to rape women that need their (men's) attention" and talk about "the mentality that allows men to rape."

At best, these comments are uninformed and insulting. At worst, they are sick and blatant-

ly prejudiced. Do you think that rape is a normal part of the male brain, that all men think about it, but only some act on it? Rape, like murder or child abuse, or any other perverse, twisted behaviors, is an aberration. There is something mentally and emotionally dysfunctional that allows men to rape, just as there is something dysfunctional that allows Jeff Dahmer to kill and eat his victims and that allowed the Manson girls to brutally butcher several people.

You, Ms. Saliccia, have the potential to murder and molest children and a whole myriad of other violent, sadistic acts. But it does not mean that you will perform these acts because it is likely that mentally and emotionally you, like myself, are not capable of such heinous things. Physically, we both have the potential, but that does not mean that we should view people in light of their "potential" destructive power. I have no more potential to rape a woman than you do to rape a man that you could physically overpower. It is just not in me.

Does Saferide discriminate? Undoubtedly yes. And just because men, as Ms. Saliccia so tactfully puts it, "have the power between their legs," does not in any way lessen the discrimination. Both women and men have the right to feel safe on their campus. As well, I don't appreciate being viewed as a "potential rapist" anymore than you would appreciate being viewed as a "sexist dyke." It is prejudgments like this that have caused such a rift not only between different races and cultures, but also between men and women. And you are not helping.

Stephen Crawford is a philosophy major at the University.

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 3159 EUGENE, OREGON 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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