

High on something

In your editorial "Death Metal" had a part in murderers' actions." (ODE, April 23), I understand your reluctance to accept such examples as music. I have a hard time swallowing the fact that you feel that the members of Cannibal Corpse or Deicide are responsible for Michael Hayward's actions.

Does "Guns" by Soundgarden make me want to go on a shooting rampage? Does Bob Dylan's "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35" make me want to get stoned? Nope. It just doesn't work like that.

In your rush to get on the conservative bandwagon, you neglected to mention one important detail: Michael Hayward was on LSD. Did you forget that? Take any average lab rat and put him on acid, and you'll find that any stimulus or emotional impulse is magnified to the umpteenth degree. The guy's brain was an omelette. His emotional thought process was null and void.

In conclusion, take the time to learn the facts before you jump on a bandwagon based on sheer

emotional reflex. Yours would be a silly argument if it were just a signed column, but instead your editorial board made your entire paper look like a pack of knee-jerk conservatives. Perhaps in the future you'll take more care with how you choose to represent yourselves. It couldn't hurt to learn the art of presenting a viable argument while you're at it, too.

Guy Barker
Pre-Journalism

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the second paragraph of the editorial, we wrote that Hayward was "apparently high on LSD." As related in the trial by District Attorney Doug Harclerod, Hayward showed signs of "mental reasoning" (despite being on LSD) during the murder and robbery. Donna Ream testified that Hayward told her he would not hurt her. Hayward and Jason Brumwell led her to the back of the store where they promised only to tie her up. Hayward then told Brumwell to beat Ream and then joined him. We think it was a combination of drugs and death metal music (as well as other factors) that ultimately

influenced Hayward's actions that night. Obviously, we did take time to "learn the facts."

R&B Missed

I am opposed to the recent cancellation of KWVA radio's "The Midnight Bomb." It is disheartening to see one of the only shows which plays R&B music cut from KWVA. My friends and I support campus radio because it gives the community the opportunity to tune in and listen to music they might not otherwise hear on other stations. Since "The Midnight Bomb" first aired last term, the weekly show had garnered a strong following reflected by the incredible number of callers who make requests and dedications. "The Midnight Bomb" is successful because there is a substantial number of students who want to hear R&B. I urge all R&B fans and music listeners to support diversity by calling KWVA at 346-4091 and voice their concerns.

Bring back "The Midnight Bomb!"

Brandon Sugiyama
Undeclared

Violence hurts women's insurance needs

Battered women across this country are denied insurance every day because they are victims of domestic violence.

How can women who have been beaten, bruised, kicked, stabbed and even crippled be denied health insurance to pay for a hospital visit? As far-fetched as it may seem, this happens all the time.

Women are denied health insurance, life insurance, property insurance, and disability insurance routinely if they have been victims of domestic violence. Insurance companies openly admit that domestic violence is a factor in considering coverage.

This policy can have extremely negative repercussions. Examples include:

- In Oregon in 1994, one of the state's largest insurance companies canceled the homeowner's insurance of a woman whose former spouse set fire to the home twice. The woman had been abused by the former spouse throughout the marriage and left the marriage in 1992. Following cancellation, the woman was referred to another insurance plan that offered her coverage at eight times the amount she had previously paid.

- In St. Cloud, Minn. recently, a woman sought the services of an organization called "Women House" because the abuse during her 12-year marriage had escalated to the point that she had to be hospitalized for a broken jaw. She subsequently was denied health insurance by two companies — one stating it would not cover any medical or psychiatric problems that could be related to the past abuse.

- In Washington recently, a woman was denied disability insurance due to treatment received for physical, emotional, and sexual abuse inflicted on her by her family during childhood and her spouse during marriage. Additionally, in 1993, another national insurance company denied her application for an increase in life insurance because of the diagnosis of a disorder related to counseling received for abuse.

What does it mean when coverage is dropped? It means that the next battered woman who needs to go to the hospital for treatment will not

COMMENTARY

Peter DeFazio

go for fear of losing her coverage. It means that every woman victimized in the more than 11,000 incidents of domestic disturbances reported in Oregon in the last nine months of 1995 (the most recent Oregon statistics available) may be made even more hesitant to come forward.

I have introduced legislation with Rep. Bernice Sanders (I-Vermont) entitled "The Victims of Abuse Insurance Protection Act," which will prohibit all insurance companies from discriminating against victims of domestic violence. The part of this legislation that prevents health insurers from discriminating in this way has already been incorporated into health reform legislation that was passed by Congress in late March. I am continuing to work with a bipartisan team to ensure that this entire bill — covering all types of insurance, is passed into law.

Specifically, this legislation prohibits insurers from discriminating against battered women by denying or terminating coverage, limiting coverage or denying claims, charging higher premium rates, and terminating health coverage provided by an abuser to a battered spouse when the spouse leaves the marriage. It codifies national protections for battered women that already exist in some states. It ensures that insurance companies will practice good "corporate citizenship" in handling a significant public concern.

Shockingly, some insurers today claim that domestic violence is a lifestyle choice — like skydiving or mountain climbing. It's not a choice — it's a crime. Women should not be victimized a second time by the insurance companies. Insurance companies should not be a silent partner in a system that all too often encourages victims of domestic violence to blame themselves.

We need to encourage, not discourage, women who are victims of domestic violence to seek the assistance they need.

Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) is a congressman representing Oregon's fourth district.

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