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## PERSPECTIVES

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## Assault on the truth

*The district attorney's report on the events of June 1 is inaccurate and masks the need for civilian review of police*

**A**s a response to a possible attack from Iraq, Israeli citizens have begun flocking to gas mask centers to teach their children how to be safe from chemical assault.

Eugene residents should consider doing the same thing if they live near potential protest sites. District Attorney Doug Harclerod's new report on police conduct during the June 1 tree-cutting protest justifies the dangerous and excessive force used. This sends the message that confrontation and the use of pepper spray will be tolerated, even if non-violent alternatives exist.

## OPINION



Jeff Shaw

More to the point, the report itself is a whitewash. People who were involved with the demonstration say they have proof that important facts were either glossed over, misrepresented or excluded entirely.

"A lot of what's reported as fact in the report has been proven in court as not fact," said James Johnston of the local activist group Cop Watch. "A lot of what people are reported as having said, we have them on videotape as saying something completely different."

Johnston also cast doubt on the completeness of the report. Many citizens who were at the protest refused to cooperate with investigators, Johnston said, "because they knew they were being targeted. They were never investigating the police actions on June 1."

Indeed, the report and the manner in which it came

about demonstrate a truism that has been proven over and over in America: Citizen review is more effective than internal review.

There are a number of reasons for this, and foremost among them is the bias involved in internal investigations. "There's no way that the DA is going to say anything non-partisan about the EPD, who they depend on to function," said local activist Randy

He's right. Studies consistently show that giving oversight powers only to law enforcement officials doesn't do anything to stop police abuses. Professors Jerome Skolnick and James Fyfe describe in their book "Above the Law" how civilian review is considered "a key to breaching the wall of protective silence police could count on from other cops."

Is there any doubt that this wall of silence is in effect in Eugene? There shouldn't be, considering that 30 Eugene officers invoked their right to remain silent and refused to comment on other officers' actions.

Allowing the police to investigate themselves is like letting O.J. look into who murdered Nicole: "But if we did pepper spray them, it would be because we loved them very much, right?"

It's not just the bias issue, however. Police and the district attorney's office should consider that their very credibility with the public is at stake. Johnston and Shadowwalker — in agreement with many Eugene residents — worry that police selectively enforce the law and target certain segments of the population disproportionately. As confidence in law enforce-



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

ment erodes, Skolnick and Fyfe note, "anything less than civilian review is unlikely to change their perception that ... the police are taking care of their own."

Independent observers such as Amnesty International have already sided with the folks on the receiving end of the pepper spray. Whenever an international organization normally advocating for people tortured in totalitarian states suddenly focuses on our community, we would do well to pay attention.

Johnston, for one, believes that further episodes of police

violence can only be prevented by holding public officials accountable. On June 1, he saw "people on the sidewalk with their hands up ... people sitting on the ground getting pepper sprayed. None of these people were [refusing to comply]. None of them were spitting on cops. The cops precipitated the violence. All the violence of that day, they are directly responsible for."

Fortunately, the people will get the chance to vote for a civilian review board in November. This is not a town where people should have to worry about condemnation

from human rights organizations. This is not a town where peaceful protest meets with violent response. This is not Israel — yet.

"We've reached a crossroads of democracy in this town. The system is not designed in the best interests of the people," Shadowwalker said. A truly independent review of police procedures might be a big step toward correcting that.

*Jeff Shaw is a columnist for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Question tobacco ad

I was appalled when I opened up Tuesday's Emerald to find an insert advertisement for Copenhagen chewing tobacco (ODE, Jan. 27). Seeing as though it is a student-run newspaper, I had thought that the Emerald would have a little more class than to allow a company like Copenhagen advertising space. In general, these insert ads undoubtedly create more litter on our campus than business for the companies advertising, but it irks me even more to see our newspaper, which represents the University of Oregon, support the tobacco industry. The Emerald is certainly not obligated to advertise Copenhagen's product, so why have

they chosen to run an ad for a product that is known to cause cancer?

I have watched my uncle slowly deteriorate from the ravages of mouth cancer. A few years ago, he had to have all his teeth removed and lost all his taste buds from the chemotherapy — all because of chewing tobacco. I certainly do not want my incidental fees funding an organization that supports any part of the tobacco industry. I urge anyone with similar views to contact the Emerald and advise them to finance their newspaper in a more ethical manner.

**Darshan Schmitz**  
International studies

## Abortion more unnatural

Recently, Bill Clinton called for a ban on human cloning. This brings up an interesting question in light of Clinton's support of keeping legal the procedure of partial-birth abortion: Just where does reproductive choice begin and end?

Many would say that cloning is so unnatural that it should not be allowed. OK, it is a rather unusual method of reproduction. However, one could say that anything like birth control or fertility treatment violates the natural evolution/destiny of the human species.

Clinton's stand is most puzzling, though. He says he's so "pro-choice" that he'll veto legislation designed to stop the thousands of partial-birth abortions per-

formed annually in the United States. To summarize the procedure, a baby in the late stages of pregnancy is delivered feet first until his/her body, but not the head, is out of the uterus. Then an instrument is inserted into the base of the skull and the brain is sucked out. Care is taken to ensure the head doesn't come out of the uterus before brain removal since the law would then classify this as infanticide.

Cloning unusual? Unnatural? Hey, from an ethical point of view, it doesn't even come close to partial-birth abortion. The main difference, however, is that one procedure leaves you with a dead baby while the other would result in a human life.

**Michael Cross**  
Graduate student