

# communiqué'

Editor's notes

## Humanity unable to shake violent social norms

I was yelled at the other day, and probably for good reason. The insert ads we ran last week were tacky, tasteless, sexist and an insult to our readers' intelligence. These inserts advertised the latest films to be released from Columbia Pictures, and in particular, "Happy Birthday to Me." The ad depicted a young man about to get a shish kebab forced down his throat with the sentence at the top reading, "John will never eat shish kebab again," followed by, "Steven will never ride a motorcycle again," and on and on and so forth.

It was even more unfortunate that these ads came out the same day the Pope was shot, a sad coincidence, indeed, for at the bottom of the ad it proudly proclaimed, "Six of the most bizarre murders you will ever see." I was appropriately scolded for condoning violence, which is what the ad was selling. "The Pope gets shot, the world is going down the tube, and you're saying, 'Oh, boy! Let's go see some nice bizarre murders.'"

After a few moments of recollection, I realized that she was right. Unfortunately, the College made money off this tacky ad. Even though it was only \$70, it was still money. The movie itself has made a profit, our newspaper profited by receiving a few more readers (I noticed that a few people on the bus who normally don't read the paper picked one up, looked at the ad, then started reading the black and white). Some people even enjoyed the advertisements. I guess everyone profits from this sort of violence.

Everyone, save the victims of brutal violence. There will probably never be any direct connection made between violent art and violence in real life (although it has been the subject of many a research paper), but just the thought of a society insensitive to extreme violence because we watch it nearly every time we go to the theater is a frightening thing to comprehend. Because there is no way we can tell whether the movies cause violence, it may always be considered a little flaky. So which is which, does life imitate art, or is it visa versa?

To bring up the life-imitates-art side, the best example is "The Manchurian Candidate," an early '60s potboiler that predicted the possibility of political assassinations, extreme violence in everyday lives and brainwashing of POWs. These were all considered absurd at the time. Then, the late '60s came.

Another possibility yet to be explored is the death of John Lennon. In the Woody Allen film, "Stardust Memories," movie star Sandy Bates gets bumped off by a crazed fan with a handgun, a scene tragically played out in front of Lennon's apartment less than three months after the film's release.

The most recent incident, of course, is the attempt on Mr. Reagan's life, allegedly by a crazed Jodie Foster fan. The suspect reportedly thought it would please Ms. Foster if he took a high official's life, as Robert DeNiro attempted to do in Martin Scorsese's "Taxi Driver." Jodie Foster starred in

the award-winning film.

Many believe films are nothing more than just a reflection of what society is and what it wants, and where it is headed. That's tough to argue when a film like "Friday the 13th" brings in \$50 million. At \$4 a head, that means 12,500,000 people wanted to see 10 sexually active teens get brutally murdered. When shit like that brings in money by the bundles, what is Hollywood supposed to think?

Many people believe the motion picture industry and the television industry should put a lid on themselves as to the kinds of picture shows they put out. But who should put a lid on what? When trash makes the top 10 in the Nielson ratings, or gathers \$50 million at the box office, it is just telling

the producers that that is what people want. What can this lid allow to slip by? Does this mean a film like "A Clockwork Orange" or "The Hand" must be nixed simply because graphic violence can be found in both?

There is no question that there is too much violence in films today. But, unfortunately, there is too much violence in society today. I used to think that this was mostly an American problem, this being the most free society. It isn't.

So who can we pin as the scapegoat for our ignorant violence? No one but ourselves. Most mammals kill by nature in order to eat meat. It's as simple as that. Man has done this, too. With the knowledge we possess, humans have developed more

efficient ways to kill, and have turned our weapons on ourselves. The instinct of survival is the strongest instinct we have, and when many humans feel threatened, they kill. With five billion people on the planet, it's easy to feel threatened. Why innocent people like Lennon or the Pope are singled out is still beyond reason. I guess some people are just crazy.

Either way, I'm not really surprised. I've come to expect stupidity from mankind. It only follows intelligence, that stands to reason, too. Man is violent by nature, murdering each other is just a bad trait that we've developed, and we're stuck with it.

--Thomas A. Rhodes



## Ireland: nation of rebels without a cause

By J. Dana Haynes  
Of The Print

Bobby Sands is dead, as is Francis Hughes. Others hover at death's door. They are or were all fighters for a cause. Revolutionaries. Idealists.

Fools.

Violence in Ireland is nothing new, but the American media, in accordance to the wishes of the public, has recently spotlighted the fighting. Everyone loves a martyr, I suppose. Joan of Arc and Patrick Henry still get good coverage. But behind every good "ultimate sacrifice," there must be a good cause, or at least a logical one. Ireland seems to be a little short on logic these days.

The battle is a complex one; few people can explain the whys and wherefores of the century-long conflict. It seems to have something to do with the Catholics vs. the Protestants (though, I suspect, not Catholicism vs. Protestantism.

Both brands of religion disdain violence, don't they?).

But it also has to do with the Irish Catholics vs. the British, the Protestants vs. the British, and the British vs. everyone. If the two warring Irish groups agree about any one thing, it's not letting the English army share in the genocidal fun.

Now if this seems a wee bit familiar to you, it's because the British army went through a similar situation in the Middle East 30 years ago. The only thing the Jews and Arabs have ever agreed upon is their mutual dislike of Her Majesty's empirical forces. It took the English nearly half a century to realize that they're persona non grata in Lebanon. They've been "protecting" Ireland for more than twice that time; the British have ever been a little slow on the uptake.

However, the rollcall isn't over yet. Along with the cathartic Catholics, protesting Protestants and the intrepid

English, mix in a healthy batch of third generation Irish Americans. Here we sit, relatively safe and sound in a country whose shores have not been breached in over 100 years (say, wasn't that the English, too?). Once a year, several million of us dust off our brogues, wear the green, and remember dear ol' Saint Pat, th Patron Saint o' Ireland. He was the bonny lad, ye'll recall, who drove all th serpents out o the Erin Isles (no one's ever bothered to drive out the Molotov Cocktails).

Those several million Americans of Irish stock (sure an I'm one meself) also remember the old country in a different way. Each year, it seems, the Irish Republican Army is bankrolled by citizens of the good old US of A. All part of the effort to get "the Brits" out of Ireland, supposedly.

So, if you've been keeping up with your scorecards, the game should read:

Our heroes: The Catholics, fighting in the name of God to stave off Protestantism. The Protestants, fighting in the name of God to stave off Catholicism. The English Army, fighting in the name of stiff-upper-lip honor and some long dead Empire (upon which the sun has most definitely set). The Irish Americans, who

donate valuable Saturday-night specials, Sten Guns, and plastic, bless our souls.

And the other team: Who? The day Bobby Sands died, a bomb destroyed a hardware store in Ulster. There were two deaths. The papers didn't list their names or religions. They were, of course, just statistics.

More's the pity.

## Tobacco fountain

Among the pleasures everybody shares in the Community Center these days besides the soft sultriness of Gloria Johnson on KGON and newspaper inserts drifting like ash over the chairs is a new one. Every time we go over to the drinking fountain by the game room we are confronted with chewing tobacco. Not in a nice little tin proffered by a baseball player, but little chunks of used chewing tobacco, glistening softly not five inches from our nose. Sweet.

We say charge a tax. A penny extra for every Asteroid game, and get those guys a spittoon. Otherwise, we're gonna print a really gross joke by one of our more depraved editors. It starts: this guy walks into a saloon...

