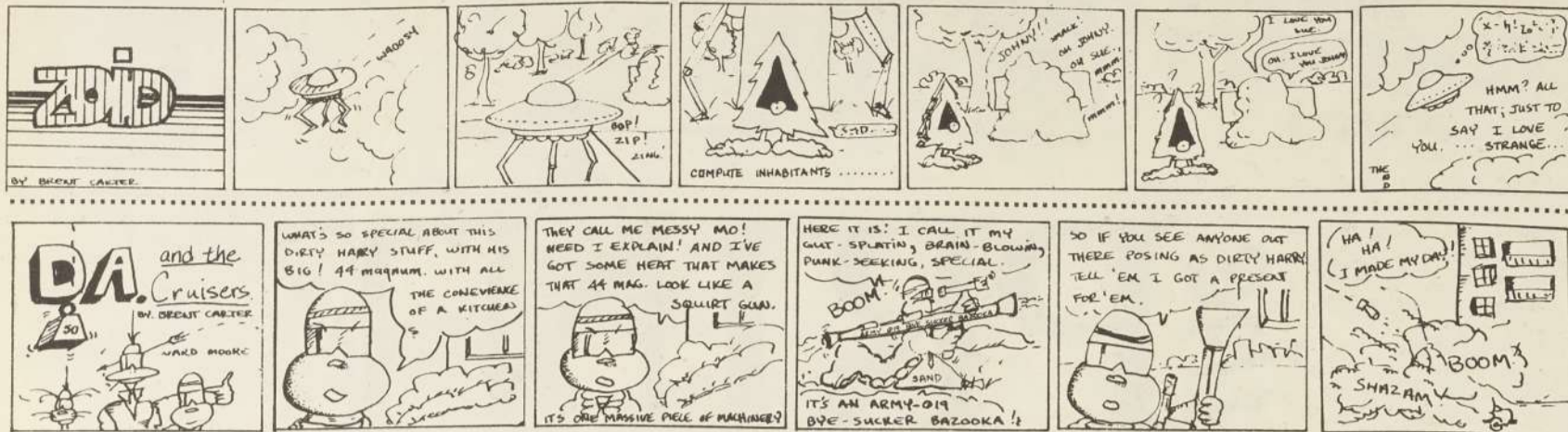


# Monologue



## Army's reasoning for rape equal to prejudice

By Shelley Ball  
News Editor

Here's a trivia question for those who consider themselves liberated women. How many are aware that the U.S. Army considers rape of service members to be an injury "incident to service," and therefore won't pay claims on such injuries?

Betty Ann Buckmiller, a 26-year-old soldier, found this out the hard way last week when, after she was raped and beaten by two soldiers in Nov. 1982, sought damages from the Army. She was told that rape is one of the pitfalls of military life, and nothing could be done for her.

Buckmiller, who is currently living in the Seattle area, plans to appeal the Army's decision by taking her case, if necessary, all the way to the Supreme Court. She is seeking \$80,000 compensation for injuries such as a broken nose, chipped tooth, cut hands, bruises and a back injury, in addition to the humiliation she experienced from her attack in a two-story barracks at Fort Ord, which is just south of San Francisco.

But it isn't as though Buckmiller hasn't received any compensation for her attack. The two soldiers who raped

and beat her were court-martialed, and one was sentenced to 40 years in prison, the other 20 years (only one of the men had actually raped her before she was freed from the attack).

Buckmiller has also been referred to the Veterans Administration as an eligible candidate for medical care, her claims for travel pay and regular pay (following the rape) are being taken care of, and even her eyeglasses, which were damaged in the assault, have been paid for.

With all these compensations under her belt, some people may think Buckmiller isn't entitled to anything else. And after all, her attackers have been punished with jail sentences. What else should she want? How about a little recognition from the Army, whose own servicemen, hence co-workers of Buckmiller, were responsible for her rape?

Why did the Army decide the case the way it did? Joseph H. Rouse, chief of the Army's general claims service, rejected Buckmiller's claim to the Army by citing a 1950 U.S. Supreme Court finding, which stated under the Federal Tort Claims Act the military is not expected to pay claims to service members who suffer injuries "incident to service."

Therefore, Buckmiller, as

well as other women who join the military, are expected to believe that rape in the military is "incident to service," and is one of the prices a woman may have to pay by wanting a military career. Nonsense!

It's ridiculous for the Army to consider rape a claimless hazard. The women who choose to serve in the armed forces are there for the same reasons there are women doctors, lawyers, secretaries and nurses: It's a job, and as such they deserve to be treated equally and with respect in regards to their male co-

workers. By not allowing women to gain some compensation for such a devastating act, the Army is removing a big part of the respect women have fought so long for in the traditionally male-oriented jobs.

Also, how many other careers can be named that seriously consider rape as "going with the territory?" It looks as though the Army, in its decision to include rape as a military hazard, is saying, in classic chauvinistic style, that rape is a form of punishment for those women who are

believed stupid enough to enter a career field thought to be reserved for men only.

Rape shouldn't be considered a hazard in the Army, because it shouldn't be happening there in the first place.

Whatever the Army's reasons for making their decision, they're not out of the judicial woods yet. Buckmiller, who is now working as a telephone company saleswoman, has chosen a Seattle attorney to represent her fight to appeal her claim rejection. Good luck, Buckmiller. You're going to need it.

## Silkwood flick misleading

By Doug Vaughan  
Editor in Chief

Last Wednesday, the Supreme Court gift-wrapped a legal setback to the nuclear industry by reinstating a \$10 million punitive damage judgement in favor of Karen Silkwood, a deceased laboratory worker of the Kerr-McGee Corp., a plutonium plant, near Crescent, Okla.

An appeals court had thrown out the judgement against the Kerr-McGee plant on the grounds that such a ruling would infringe on the federal government's authority to regulate nuclear safety.

This decision opens the doors for people detrimentally affected by radiation, like Silkwood was, to seek large sums of money from nuclear operators.

The turnout fits perfectly with the release of the film, titled appropriately "Silkwood." The rebirth of the actual court-case has stirred controversy, but the accuracy of the film has even more debate.

Film critics have raved about the box-office hit, "Silkwood," portrayed by Meryl Streep, as it now is seventh on the list of box-office successes, having grossed \$10.8 million in the first four weeks. The problem? Simply its accuracy.

Since the movie is based on an actual event, the audience is led to believe whatever happens is the truth. On the contrary, the movie leads the audience to believe actual non-existing facts, and fails to point out many known facts.

The basis of the story is that Silkwood died in a car accident Nov. 13, 1974, on her way to meet with a New York Times reporter. She had been contaminated with plutonium days earlier. The actual cause of her accident was never determined.

The main concern with critics is that the

movie does not answer the question of whether Silkwood was murdered. The actual reports considered her accident a one-car accident. In the movie it was implied that she was forced off the road.

Whether it was murder or an accident was never determined, so it was filed as an accident. Leaving the movie theater, I thought she had been murdered.

Along with the accident, all the so-called evidence that Silkwood was taking to the Times reporter disappeared. The movie stresses this point. In actuality, it was not known if she had the documents that showed health and safety violations of the plant.

It was union officials' suggestion that Silkwood was forced off the road, but police abandoned that possibility calling it a one-car accident.

Through the film I was led to believe that someone was informing the company of Silkwood's gathering of information against the company. Many people I have talked to also thought her roommate, played by Cher, was the informant. In actuality, nothing of the kind has been proved.

Some critics also believe there were factual errors in the movie. Silkwood claimed that fuel rods made by Kerr-McGee were faulty. In the movie, a character said such a defect could "wipe out a state." Critics say this is not true.

It's my belief, even though the film has been criticized for its misuse of facts, that this type of movie is positive just because it will raise the audience's curiosity. Just as the fictional film "The Day After" raised questions. People need to be concerned about these issues.

It's true that the audience leaves with the questions: "Was she murdered?," "How was she contaminated?" and "What happened to the documents?" But put yourself in her family's and friends' shoes—they probably are still trying to answer these questions.

Clackamas Community College

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