

Manslaughter and abortion

The Superior Court in Boston, Massachusetts found a local doctor guilty of manslaughter Saturday after the doctor had performed an otherwise legal abortion. Eleven of the 12 jurors felt that the physician's efforts to smother a 24-week-old fetus were illegal, even though its removal from the womb of its mother's body was not.

The case of Dr. Kenneth Edelin has become the focus of nationwide legal, moral, and religious controversy because of the surprising verdict. Most observers had thought Edelin was safe from conviction after the Supreme Court's historic 1973 ruling which outlawed state intervention during the first 24 to 28 weeks of pregnancy. But the manslaughter conviction has split the already complex abortion question into at least two main issues: the right of the mother to terminate unwanted pregnancy, and the right of the fetus to all possible life-sustaining care even when artificially delivered three months premature.

Sidelights such as the fact that Dr. Edelin is black, that Boston is one of the nation's most Catholic cities, and the unusual vehemence of the jury foreman have only clouded the twin issues. But the loophole that the jury found in the nation's abortion law is significant. Does abortion imply the death of the fetus? In a ghastly way this question reminds us of the pound of flesh argument in the *Merchant of Venice*. It is a fine distinction but a vital one.

Hard cases have traditionally made bad law, and this is particularly true with abortion. What is demanded is a definition of life itself, and Saturday's ruling expanded that definition to any fetus with possible respiratory faculties, or any fetus over 20 weeks of age. In other words the Boston decision gave women a month less freedom in governing their bodies than the Supreme Court was willing to allow.

It is too easy to criticize the ignorance of the mechanics and the bartenders who comprised the Boston jury on this essentially scientific question, because the judgment of any doctor would be equally arbitrary. Once again technology has forced on us a decision that we are neither intellectually nor morally equipped to make. But the question is urgent. Abortions are now second only to tonsillectomies both in their frequency and their safety. In Chapel Hill alone, an average of at least three abortions are performed a day.

The abortion law should once and for all be settled, even if it must be done arbitrarily, to give women as much freedom as possible with their bodies. The 24-28 week Supreme Court rule is as good a guide as any and it is wrong of the Boston court to try to circumvent the rule by keeping terribly premature fetuses alive. That is a greater "crime against life" than abortion.

L.T. McRae

Hoots, hollers won't help economy

Circa 60,000 B.C. Glog, the chieftain of a band of cavemen, was confronted by certain members of his band who were indignant because Klog, the band's spearhead maker, had raised the price of a spearhead from two sabre-tooth tiger teeth to four. The crowd demanded that Glog do something about it, so Glog demanded an explanation from Klog.

Klog replied that flint was getting hard to come by, and he had to spend more time looking for flint than he spent actually making spearheads. His output of spearheads was thus reduced, and he couldn't make a living at the old price. On top of that, Klog continued, he couldn't supply as many spearheads at a price of two tiger teeth as the band wanted to buy at that price. He had tried to hold the price line, but various members of the band kept bothering him at work or waking him up in the middle of the night, offering to pay three or four or five teeth for spearheads that hadn't even been produced yet. Others had sought to be first in line for spearheads, and some had camped for several days at a time outside his cave. While they were camping of course they hadn't been hunting and Klog himself had found it increasingly difficult to buy meat.

Klog resented all this waste of his and

others' time and after deep thought hit upon the idea of raising the price of spearheads. At four tiger teeth per spearhead his problems had disappeared. Fewer people wanted to buy spearheads at that price, and everyone was more careful about how he used his spear. The wastrels who had casually discarded spears because the points had dulled learned to sharpen points. This pleased Klog who was proud of his spearheads and hated seeing them abused.

Klog concluded by asking what all the fuss was about: he made enough spearheads to supply anyone who wanted one at four tiger teeth, and no one was wasting time waiting for a spearhead. All in all, it seemed like a considerable improvement over the previous chaos.

Someone in the crowd cried out that the band's poor were being destroyed by the unfair, monopolistic price of spearheads. Klog, who was something of a curmudgeon, responded that the poor were poor because they were lousy hunters. At four tiger teeth per spearhead only the better hunters bought spearheads, and the band's limited supply of spearheads went where it would do the most good. The poor, Klog finished, damn well ought to find



something they could do better than hunt.

No one attempted to refute Klog's argument with reason; his statements were met with hoots, hollers and horselaughs from the mob. Glog hadn't gotten to be chieftain by being a poor politician, and he saw how things were going. So Glog told Klog to reduce the price of spearheads to two tiger teeth. If he didn't, he, Glog, would personally break Klog's head. If there weren't enough spearheads for everyone, they'd be sold to the first comers. (No one had

invented rationing yet, and Glog, like most politicians, was shrewd but hardly innovative.)

Glog's policy had the predictable outcome. Klog couldn't buy enough food with his income to maintain his vigour, and his output of spearheads shrank even further. Spearheads went mostly to the lazy and infirm who had nothing better to do than camp at the mouth of Klog's cave for four days at a time. The best hunters were busy hunting and usually arrived at Klog's to find that all the spearheads had already been sold. So the worst hunters got the spearheads and felt no compulsion to use them wisely, while the best hunters missed kills for lack of spearheads. As a result the band's output of meat shrank, and the band was soon on the verge of starvation.

Eventually things came out all right though, for 60,000 B.C. was a simpler and more direct time than ours. A group of the better hunters broke Glog's head and elected a new chieftain. Klog was allowed to raise his price to four tiger teeth, and the worst hunters were put to work gathering flint so that Klog could spend all his time making spearheads. Klog found that even after paying the flint gatherers, he could lower his price to three tiger teeth, fill all the band's demand and have spearheads left over for trade with other bands.

So the band lived happily for several years until Klug, the maker of bearskin sleeping robes, was compelled to raise his price because of a shortage of bears, whereupon the mob demanded that somebody do something about the outrageous price of bearskin sleeping robes, and the whole thing started over.

Sad to relate, in the intervening 62,000 years, the mob has never found a champion who could present a reasoned rebuttal to Klog's economics; the argument is still by hoot, holler and horselaugh. And Klog's victory was fleeting; the mob has won more often than not.

Moral: Before he screams that the government should do something, a reasonable man will first ask, "Is there anything the government can do? If so, at what price?"

Larry McRae is a graduate student in economics.

Marcus Williams

End 'dangerous silence'

Editor's note: The following was excerpted from Student Body President Marcus Williams' State of the Campus address, delivered Wednesday, Feb. 2.

With few exceptions, the year has passed swiftly and quietly. This is not to say that there were no exciting events; it just appeared that the average student did not know and/or care about them. In fact, as one example of this, social dialogue reached a frightening ebb. Even the DTH had to give out assignments in creative writing in order to present some newsworthy reporting. Yes, the campus was in a dire state; a "dangerous silence" pervaded the air.

Maybe it would be insightful to attempt to pinpoint a few tempo-setting factors. Without a doubt, the first and the most prominent was the economic crisis. Fighting for financial survival can be a full-time responsibility; it can exhaust the time and energy of the best of academicians. Such a predicament lends credence to the slogan — The more one has, the more one should participate.

A second factor influencing student life has been a contagious political cynicism. Since Nixon hurt our pride,

we are not eager to give someone else a personal mandate to repeat the trick. According to the National Census Bureau, 64 per cent of those citizens 18 to 21 years old never even bothered to register. The voting percentage, of course, was more appalling; a scant 21 per cent. On our campus, it took only a handful of students to permanently establish a legislative body (CGC) that has been the subject of extensive criticism. (Personally, I think the voting students displayed remarkable wisdom.)

Thirdly, someone instigated the "grade inflation" discussion. This ostensibly led to escalating work loads and diminishing rewards. Thus, students astutely perceived the necessity to become more intimately engaged in their studies.

The remainder of the factors form a list that is long and continuous. Perhaps others are more pertinent. Are you concerned enough to offer any?

In light of the above, it may be contended that a decline in student activeness was both fitting and proper. I wholeheartedly disagree. And yet, it is not the dissipation of student involvement that is most disturbing.

Instead, my gravest concern lies with the covert concomitants of this non-involvement. Lack of social and racial interaction, deteriorating social dialogue, maladjusted priorities, insensitivity to the needs and desires of others and reckless indifference, appear to be the most salient. These elements can reduce the expected educational experience to a mere educational process. They do serve to precipitate David Duke incidents. And eventually they develop individuals incapable of correcting the present sicknesses of our society.

President John F. Kennedy once remarked: "Those who do nothing are inviting shame as well as violence." Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. also broached this situation by saying "There is a dangerous silence today, which unintentionally encourages evil to flourish." Even Albert Einstein had said, "The world is in greater peril from those who tolerate evil than from those who actively commit it."

But perhaps, no thoughts are as convincing as the experience related in 1963, during the March on Washington. "When I was a rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin under the Hitler regime, I learned many things. The most important thing that I learned in my life, and under tragic circumstances, is that bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problems: The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is *silence*. A great people, which had created a great civilization, had become a nation of silent onlookers. They remained silent in the face of hate, in the face of brutality and in the face of mass murder."

It is time for you to get involved. Break the silence. I have an abiding trust that you will.

Jim Cooper, Greg Turosak
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The Daily Tar Heel



Letters to the editors

Editorial criticizing Coalition was hypocritical

To the editors:

As members of the Carolina Coalition, we feel that the student body deserves a reply to Friday's unfair and blatantly inaccurate DTH editorial.

In a classic case of the pot calling the kettle black, we were slandered as "false prophets... a mutual admiration society" and, generally, people who want to preserve the status quo and get our buddies elected to political positions.

The Carolina Coalition doesn't pretend to prophesy. We are a group of non-apatetic students trying to improve SG by putting vital issues before the students. We, like the editors, have a right to endorse candidates if we desire.

The Coalition is not a clique. The group eagerly seeks membership by all students. Any endorsements that may be made will be decided by the entire membership.

Rather than trying to push SG's other foot into the grave, as Cooper-Turosak suggest, the Coalition is trying to revive a dying SG by combatting apathy and encouraging involvement.

It is extremely hypocritical of the editors to condemn us for this effort. Only Jan. 30, a DTH editorial begged students to get involved. It is a sin to keep a low profile, the editors declared. And the editorial called on the student to "break out of the conventional wisdom around him by daring to try to lead his fellows."

Now the editors damn us for doing just that.

Finally, Friday's editorial was inaccurate. The Coalition is small, but we have well over 50 members, not 11 as was written by Cooper-Turosak. We're not on a pedestal, boys, and we advise you to check your footing. It's getting shaky.

Ben Steelman
403 Grimes
Laura Dickerson
111 Spencer
Winston Cavin
14-C University Gardens
Chip Cox
105 Grimes
Tony Wike
104 Grimes

Students need good FM station

To the editors:

I was very dismayed to read the latest chapter of "The Further Misfortunes of WCAR" in Wednesday's DTH. It now seems as if the university has abandoned WCAR on the FCC's doorstep. This "hands off" position by the university seems perfectly asinine to me, especially after all the time, energy, and money that has been used to get the proposed FM station to its present stage.

Chancellor Taylor said in his letter to the FCC that "the University cannot assume responsibility for a second FM station in this

community." The "first" FM station is of course WUNC-FM, which is about to make its grand and glorious reappearance after several years off the air. When it does sign on in a few months, it will, for all practical purposes, represent the university so far as radio goes. If its programming resembles the "scratchy classical" format that the station had before, it is doubtful that the station will have a strong student audience. It will not be operated like a student station or aimed at a primarily student audience.

The student body deserves a campus station to serve their interests, especially since they are the ones that are largely supporting and not benefiting from the existing AM campus facility.

I wish that all administrators concerned had done their homework and been thoroughly familiar with the situation so that it would not have necessary for them to wake up one day and announce a complete reversal in position. If the university and its officials weren't willing to accept responsibility for the FM student station, they should have made their feelings known before now.

This issue should not be taken lightly because the outcome could affect the university and surrounding community for years to come. I feel that the university should re-examine its hasty new decision with the interest of the student body in mind. Students that care whether or not they will have an FM student-operated station next fall should make their feelings known to the

administration.

John McAllister
622 Ehringhaus

Ruffin proposes alternative plan

To the editors:

The author of Thursday's editorial "Condic should prevent segregation, intrusion," appears to be considerably ignorant of Ruffin resident's sentiments concerning the future status of Ruffin dorm. The author seems equally ignorant of the "campaign" mounted by residents to stop tentative plans for the dorm.

There has not been a "campaign" by residents to stop tentative plans concerning Ruffin dorm. There is a proposal presently under consideration by housing officials which entails housing female handicapped students on first floor, and transforming the dorm into a co-ed International Student Center (ISC). This proposal has not been condemned by the residents, as the DTH would have people believe. Most residents feel that these are valid, reasonable goals, yet the proposal would bring about almost complete relocation of the 90 plus present Ruffin inhabitants. Instead of a campaign against this plan, the residents have, however, submitted an alternative proposal

which provides for all intended goals previously mentioned with less relocation.

Ruffin's alternative proposal would allow for the same facilities for female handicapped students. The female segment of the ISC would be completed as soon as desired. The only differentiation between Ruffin's plan and the one which has been under consideration involves the male segment of the ISC. It is Ruffin's proposal that those persons presently living in Ruffin would be allowed to live on third and fourth floors next year, with male international students occupying the remaining spaces. As residents would move out of third and fourth floors, male international students would be granted first priority on these new spaces.

This would allow for a gradual transition from the present men's housing unit to the International Student Center, with the female segment on first and second floors being completed next semester and the male segment reaching completion within two to three years. This plan, I feel, is a plausible compromise which would provide the campus with housing for female handicapped students, an International Student Center, and would appease the present Ruffin residents who would in time be forced to move.

The reason Ruffin residents aren't anxious to move is not because of a beloved ice machine or a cherished color T.V. It is because a great many residents take pride in their dorm, and for all practical purposes, their home. We may not cherish our

apiances, but we do indeed care for the friendships we have made here in the dorm. Complete relocation would destroy much of this. Moving en masse to another dorm, as ignorantly suggested by Thursday's article, has long been deemed impossible by Dr. Condic. If possible, it would merely cause a similar problem in another dorm.

I feel that Ruffin's proposal should be seriously considered. Why break up a great group of guys unnecessarily when a suitable alternative is available which will subsequently bring about the same results? I see no reason why Ruffin's proposal should not be accepted.

Jon Mundorf
President, Ruffin Dorm

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