

Corporate crime

On May 18, 1979, a six-member Oklahoma City jury ordered the Kerr-McGee Corporation to pay \$10 million in punitive damages for the negligent operation of their plutonium processing plant and \$500,000 for the plutonium contamination of Karen Silkwood.

This decision set precedents for the liability of the nuclear industry in cases of radiation contamination. If the decision is upheld on appeal, the nuclear industry will be forced to improve their safety standards to avoid legal action. The cost of such improvements may not be economically feasible; at least this is the opinion of many both pro- and anti-nuclear development.

But there is another interesting facet to this landmark decision. This was a very high profile case of corporate crime that went beyond the purely financial sphere. Instead of the commonplace charges of price fixing, fraudulent financial manipulation, bribery, illegal rebates and government kickbacks, Kerr-McGee was charged with failure to maintain safety standards. And the Silkwood lawyers have also charged that Kerr-McGee conspired to violate Ms. Silkwood's civil rights. All this at the end of a decade that has paid a lot of lip service to the evolving "corporate conscience."

What civil rights were violated? The prosecution asserts that there is strong evidence which shows that Kerr-McGee hired an agent who entered Karen's apartment and photographed the notes she was compiling on the health and safety violations at the plant, and on the doctoring of quality control records to conceal defective welds on plutonium fuel rods. There is also evidence that points to unlawful wiretapping, bugging and extensive surveillance of Silkwood.

Furthermore, when Kerr McGee sent a team of inspectors to Karen's apartment to test for traces of plutonium, they were instructed to peruse all of her papers and return any material that could be used to discredit her to Jim Reading, Kerr-McGee's Security Chief.

Finally, a Kerr-McGee official has testified that one of the Oklahoma State Patrolmen at the accident scene saw "large amounts of clearly marked Kerr-McGee documents" in Silkwood's car. This same patrolman agreed to confiscate those documents with the Kerr-McGee official. Before the patrolman could follow through with this plan, other Kerr-McGee officials checked Silkwood's car and the documents disappeared.

There are many people, including a high ranking Justice Department official, who do not believe that Karen Silkwood's death was an accident. In the violation of civil rights suit, lawyer Danny Sheehan will attempt to prove that there is a link between Karen's death and the alleged surveillance plot. But Sheehan believes that there are far-reaching implications under the surface. "The Silkwood case may be only the tip of a huge network that's been set up to stop nuclear dissidents around the country," said Sheehan. "That's where I think this case will lead us."

The "corporate conscience" evolves at a slow rate. My guess is that corporate responsibility will become a reality in about the same amount of time that it takes plutonium-239 to decay to a harmless substance — a quarter of a million years.

Can we afford to wait?

Jeff Moore

the Gateway

If it happens on campus...it's news to us.

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STAFF THIS ISSUE: Peter Michalyszyn, Linda Hanna, W. Reid Glenn, hey P.J. you're yesterday's news, Barry Lee, Amanda Flowers, the Ethnic Shuffle Orchestra, Thumbo Whatskillers, Garnet DuGray, Jens Anderson, Maxine Murphy, Barb Horricks, Ollers beat the Rangers!, Margaret Donovan, Sharon Bell, the Gang of Four, Sue Eberlein, Russ Sampson, thanks for the cake Alexandra Milner, Kent Blinston, Jeff Moore, liberate the memory of Karen Silkwood, good luck Maggie!

Gays already protected

Human rights is a valid issue, most people would agree with that. However, I would like to respond to Peter Michalyszyn's article "Struggle for gay rights in Alberta long, discouraging." Has the gay community, in their zeal to obtain a writ of government sanction, paused to consider the possible results?

The Alberta Government

has shown abnormal respect for the integrity of the individual's right to sexual preference. Thus far there has been no legislation to hinder the rights of gays, and, in this ultraconservative province, there are a great number of influential people who would like to make things harder for gays if given the chance.

Whitfield and the Gay

Students' facilities

I disagree with several of the points made in your editorial of March 13 on the proposed fee increase of \$7 to pay for SUB expansion. First, you question the desirability of growth of the Students' Union. What's wrong with providing more facilities to students? That is one of the major purposes of the SU. Second, you want guarantees that the fund will be used for its intended purpose. I agree that guarantees should exist but if the SU does have financial difficulties, would you prefer that it go bankrupt rather than use this fund to survive? Third, you suggest that the SU cannot handle more business but you offer no evidence to support this. Fourth, another licensed bar, one of the intended uses of the

funds, has the potential of generating profits that can be used to subsidize other SU services. Is *The Gateway* against the improvement or expansion of SU services such as the Housing and Exam Registries, FOS, and Student Help? Fifth, might the comments on the infeasibility of the CJSR expansion plan reflect displeasure with the part of the plan that involves taking over the current *Gateway* offices? Finally, you suggest that the intended uses of the expansion fund are relatively unimportant. I believe that a more valid opinion on the importance of the intended uses will be expressed on March 21 in the referendum.

David Roberts
Commerce IV

Alliance Towards Equality (Superiority?) has shown real naivety (as well as poor judgement in associating something as wholesome as homosexuality with "the mentally and physically handicapped and criminals") in thinking that an act of the legislature will protect gays from discrimination. Think about the landslide of forms you had to fill out the last time you had any dealing with a government agency. If the government were forced to deal with the gay issue there would be a new box on all those forms; sexual orientation. Now (at the risk of offending another minority) let's call a spade a spade; there are bigots in all walks of life. Suppose that the fellow who decides how much student loan money you need, or if you are entitled to renter's aid, or worker's compensation — is opposed to homosexuality. Well, there is that box triumphantly checked "practicing Homosexual." That guy just might make life hard for you. Oh, but you have the legislation to get back at him. He knocked the chip off, but who put it there? Sorry, Whitfield, if the "government" was angered by the inclusion of "sexual orientation" to the amendments of the Alberta Individual Rights Protection Act perhaps its a warning.

Mike Mayo
Arts III

Brainwashed writers biased

Bruce Christensen and Brent Aliksiuk's "response" to the letter written by the Iranian students of Waterloo, made me certain that the idea I have about the brainwashing going on around here is right.

The so-called "realistic response" was nothing but a rude letter; the result of lack of knowledge and information about the Iranian people and their revolution.

The letter criticized the hostage-taking in Iran. Well, let me ask you, my fellow human beings; why didn't Mr. Christensen or Mr. Aliksiuk make any response to the black Friday massacre (Sept. 8, 1978 in Tehran) in which ten thousand unarmed Iranians were savagely murdered by American-trained Iranian soldiers, C.I.A. agents and Israeli troops. And why did your "human loving" Ambassador Mr. Ken Taylor who took "heroic measures" to rescue six Americans from Iran not even notice the massacre of ten thousand innocent lives, and did not move a single hand to rescue even one Iranian from death chambers.

The response called the Iranian people "barbarians." You can not feel the way that Iranians do. If you had seen your brother's hands and legs were cut off, your father tortured to death, your sister raped by the members of the secret police, and your mother go blind from crying, you could then feel the same way as Iranians do.

You Canadians once put thousands of Japanese in concentration camps during World War II to protest against Japan. Is this that much unlike the taking of the hostages? The Japanese did nothing to Canada compared to what the U.S. has done to Iran. For over 30 years the world has watched the torture and massacre of the Iranians under the American- and C.I.A.-backed regime of the Shah. No one ever stepped in to protest those massacres, but now that 50 Americans have taken as hostages, all of a sudden the

United Nations, the Vatican, Muhammed Ali, and other powerful sources including the Canadian embassy and its ambassador, have all stepped in to save the American hostages in Iran. Doesn't that make you think that the United Nations, the Vatican, Muhammed Ali and the Canadian ambassador are all working for the same boss that the Shah and all the members of his regime worked for?

I take offence when some brainwashed Canadians call Iranians barbarians. If the Iranian people were as barbaric and as savage as the imperialist U.S., the hostages would have been killed a long time ago, the same barbaric way that hundreds of thousands of Iranians were, over past thirty years.

Ahmad Doroudian
Science II

Bourgeois punks

This article is in connection with the March 18th, 999 Concert. To be concise, the initial billing was to include "The Dickies" who for reasons unclear to myself, were no-shows forcing the inclusion of locals P.J. Burton and the Smarties. After an impressive entrance (but eventually short-lived performance) the band was literally forced off the stage by a barrage of bottles directed at them by an easily recognizable contingent whom would loathe to be referred to as "punks." Who the hell are these guys anyway? How can they possibly justify their existence in Alberta, or in Canada for that matter. If they, indeed are attacking the existing music scene, this in itself has its merits and can be commended but how can they substantiate it through themselves playing trashy cover versions of "The Blitzkrieg Bop," "Sonic Reducer" and "Anarchy in the UK." They're as goddamned boring as the clone bands they're attempting to replace.

The entire punk scene has nicely blossomed into Disco's little brother as evidenced by recent concerts at Dinwoodie, Lister Cafeteria, and most recently SUB Theatre. Hey, let's all dye our hair and wear our "mod" jackets.

Don't these guys listen to the real punks they're supposedly emulating. Quote Johnny Lydon, "It's most certainly not about the clothes you wear — get

that," and when asked about what they would do if they suddenly became accepted the Pistols replied "we'd find a way to get banned."

The very same "punks" that attended early Smarties concerts are throwing bottles at them now. Sure, bite the hand that feeds you. For all intensive purposes P.J. Burton alone was responsible for the sudden emergence of punk in Edmonton and he most appropriately was there, for what this person sees as the demise of it.

But alas, the punks will keep spitting like real punks are supposed to. What next. Custom-made punk suits. I predict Edmonton's own resurgence of the Mods. Hey, why not? We doubtless all saw Quadrophonia and read "Letter from Britain" each month.

P.S. Is non-existent Security at concerts the new trend?

Yours truly - a retired punk.
Chris Hartt
Commerce 3

LETTERS

Letters to the *Gateway* should be a maximum of 250 words on any subject. Letters must be signed and should include faculty, year and phone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. All letters must be typed (or very neatly written). We reserve the right to edit for libel and length.