

## THE OBSERVER

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### ■ AND IN THIS CORNER

## Clearing the air within the confines of ND

Before I dive headlong into this week's issues, I will make this solemn promise to all my readers: This will be the last column I will write about Notre Dame this semester. Truly, I swear.

One thing I really wish Right-to-Life supporters on this campus would do is actually read the fine print (so to speak).

### Matthew Apple

The topic for the past year among students and theological pseudo-law professors has been the Congressional "partial birth abortion ban," which was vetoed by President Clinton this spring.

No, I am not going to support partial birth abortions, nor am I going to reiterate the gruesome details of this particular procedure. The last thing I want to do in this column is resort to heart-wrenching, emotionally-manipulative descriptions (perish the thought).

Instead, I'd like to mention the following fact: Clinton said, for the record, that he would sign the proposed act into law on the condition there be exceptions for cases when the life of the mother is at stake or in case of incest or rape. Dole and Gingrich knew this, yet they purposely did not add clauses to that effect. Therefore, the Republican-led Congress knew ahead of time that Clinton was going to veto it, and, instead of compromising with him as they knew full well they could, chose to play politics and make it seem Clinton was a baby-killer, etc., etc. Which just goes to

show, none of these politicians give much of a damn about people unless they perceive it to be politically expedient.

It is true that the majority of partial-birth abortions are performed in cases that do not affect the life of the mother, which is precisely why Clinton said he would sign the bill. However, it is also true that, according to the results of the *Roe v. Wade* (whose statutes I'm sure the members of every Right to Life group in the U.S. currently has memorized) abortion is legal during the first trimester, i.e., the first three months. After the first trimester, it is the states' individual responsibility to set a limit on the time allowed for abortions.

Now, since the aim of the Republican party is, and has been for some time now, to shift the power back to the states, isn't this something which the Republicans would approve? Why is it that the Republican party, the party of individual rights and responsibility, the party of "give power to the people," wants to create a federally-mandated law to govern something for which the states already have the power to govern? And if the states which currently allow partial birth abortions do so because they have no laws prohibiting it, why don't the people of that state demand of their state legislatures that they do?

In any case, this procedure is so expensive that you have to be financially "well-off" in order to afford it — welfare and health insurance won't pay for this operation. Even if partial birth abortions were illegal by federal law, the people who could afford them before the law could certainly afford them after the law. Laws don't apply to the independently wealthy. (What, you think someone besides Ollie North could have made illegal millions on illegal arms deals? You think IBM or Coke cared that

it was illegal to set up shop in South Africa in the 1980s? You think anyone besides Marion Berry or Michael Irvin would have gotten more than a proverbial slap on the wrist for cocaine possession?)

Of course, none of this qualifies the Notre Dame Right-to-Life organization to "challenge" the veto. Congress can challenge the veto. Everyone else can only protest it. One thousand students in a country of over 250 million can hardly "challenge" anything.

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Speaking about Notre Dame...as last fall when I took a glance through ND's well-respected alcohol policy (especially on football Saturdays, when no one in their right mind would dare take a drink), this fall I'll take a peek at the statement concerning crime on campus. (For those of you who have absolutely no idea what I'm talking about, it's that rectangular glossy white pamphlet you got at registration which you immediately deposited into the nearest waste paper receptacle.)

The most interesting crime statistic at Notre Dame would have to be the category "forced sodomy."

As far as I know, "forced sodomy" would be rape, which is always "forced." Any "forced" sexual action is violent and mentally and physically damaging. What I'd like to know, is why bother making a separate category for different "kinds" of rape? It doesn't matter how or to whom it happened—a violent crime is still a violent crime. There's absolutely no good reason for this dubious distinction.

For that matter, I can think of several categories that were (accidentally, I assume) left out of the statistics. First thing which comes to mind is the total

absence of any statistics for sexual harassment, which, as we all know, never happens on a Catholic campus.

As regards that interesting oversight, there could possibly be any number of revealing sub-categories. For example:

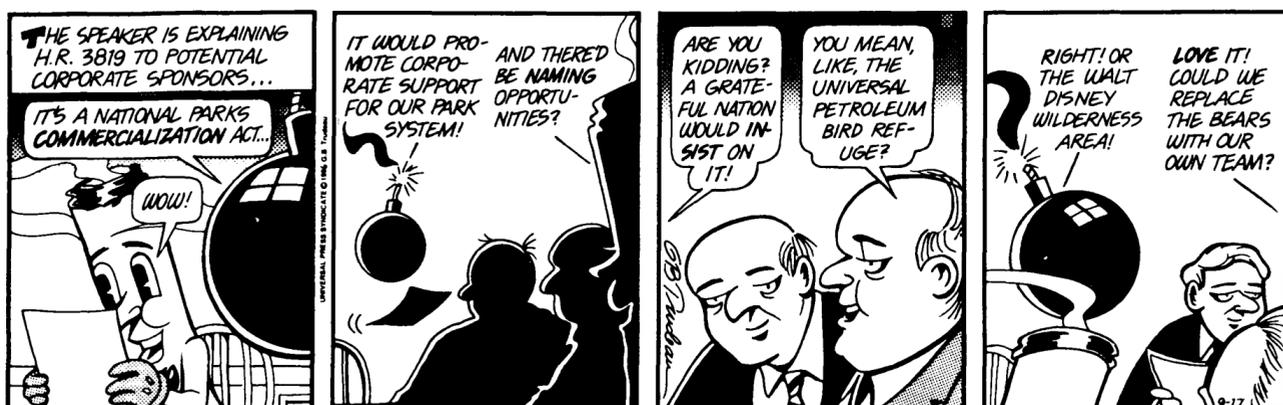
- Number of students sexually molested by tenured professors.
  - Number of students sexually molested by varsity sports players on full scholarship.
  - Number of students raped by varsity sports players on full scholarship.
  - Number of varsity sports players suspended from bowl games for a different reason than the one the press was told.
  - Number of students paid by the university to leave college and to forget the entire unfortunate incident.
  - Number of alumni lawyers who would gladly defend their alma mater, despite the fact that all such cases would be a conflict of interest.
- And, of course, there could be the ever-popular category.
- Number of varsity sports players who were so intelligent that they decided to get completely tanked and play chicken with a train.

But, you know, that's what I like so much about this university. Nobody ever has to worry about sexual harassment or molestation on this campus, and nobody ever has to worry about Notre Dame ever recruiting unsavory characters who might help them make six million dollars every January. These problems just don't happen here.

God, country and Notre Dame. It really is the best of all possible worlds.

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### ■ DOONESBURY



### GARRY TRUDEAU

### ■ QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, and breeds reptiles of the mind."

—William Blake