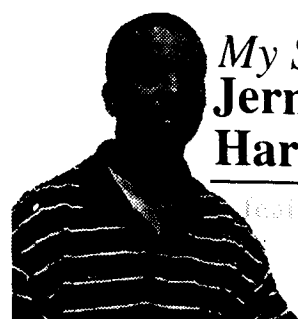


Reconsider harsh sentencing for young juvenile



My Society
Jermaine Hardy
Editorial Columnist

Imagine yourself, walking into the intimidating confines of a correctional facility for the first time in your life. Tight handcuffs sting your wrists as you are gripped arm by arm in the palms of correction officers, who escort you into a small cell block, which will be your home from now until forever. Your last breath of freedom has been taken, never to be given back. And if all this is already enough to depress you, imagine that you are only 14 years old trapped in this nightmare of a predicament.

Until the day you die you will live amongst some of the most violent men of society. In this case, the theory of a correctional facility having the potential to correct is a farce. Therefore at the tender age of 14 it would be more accurate to say that in such a case your life is basically taken away.

This is what happened to 14-year-old Lionel Tate when he was sentenced to life in prison on March 9 for the 1999 murder of Tiffany Eunick, who was 6 years of age at the time. Lionel, who was 12 at the time, was playing wrestling with Tiffany when the horseplay turned fatal, as defense attorneys contend. As a result, Eunick suffered several injuries, including a fractured skull and a lacerated liver.

With prosecutors and defense medical experts pointing out the extent of the injuries, many debate whether or not the tragedy was in fact a result of horseplay or just a senseless act of brutality. Although the defense argued that the tragic death of Eunick was an accident, the Florida jury came to the opposite consensus and gave Tate the maximum penalty, life in prison.

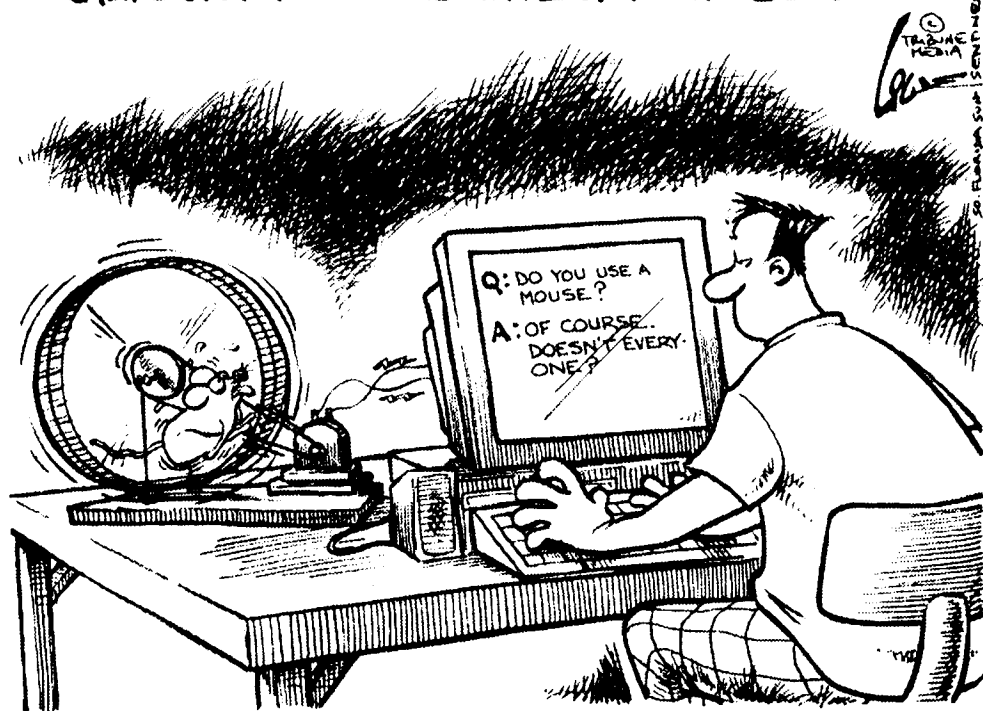
Now, the debate of whether or not the incident was accidental or not is one thing but a debate about giving a 14-year-old a life sentence for a crime he committed at the age of 12 is not a debate at all. To try a juvenile as an adult is in essence an unjust practice, especially in the case at hand. Kids, especially those at the adolescent age, have a lot of mental and physical development to undergo. A 12-year-old specifically is naturally unaware of the consequences of his or her actions and it is for this reason that he or she should be treated as such. However, due to laws in Florida, which allow prosecutors to try juveniles as adults for some violent crimes, young Lionel will have his childhood disregarded as he is sent to jail for life. To throw this young boy in jail for the rest of his life with a herd of violent criminals is to deny this child any possibility of rehabilitation. If our jail system fails grant a 14-year-old the potential for rehabilitation then it can rehabilitate no one and should therefore never speak of the word again.

The death of Tiffany Eunick was undoubtedly a tragic misfortune and young Lionel does deserve some rehabilitative punishment to correct his behavior, but the justice system will cause another tragedy if it takes away the life of another young human being. We are dealing with children, not fully matured adults. This factor should have definitely come into account when judging Lionel Tate. At the age of 12, many boys and girls can't distinguish between what is real and unreal when it comes to the manipulative images they see on television. And as defense attorneys indicate, Lionel was imitating his favorite wrestling heroes, whom he constantly watched on TV. I bring this up not to blame the case on television or wrestling, but to say that these influential factors should be taken into account before throwing a child in jail forever.

For the case at hand I support an act of clemency to be carried out in order to reduce Tate's first-degree murder sentence. Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, who has proposed to set up a clemency hearing in which a panel of six elected cabinet officials including Bush will vote on a reduced sentence, has advocated such an act. I hope that a second look at the case encourages a more compassionate outlook before the life of another child is taken too early.

Hardy's column appears every three weeks.

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Should I prepare to be a super senior?



Chew on This
Rob Wynne

Ah, it's scheduling time once again. I'm looking forward to once again chatting with the automated voice system; she is such a polite woman. Press 1 to add a class, press 2 to drop a class... She even keeps her composure as I sit there on the phone cussing because a class is filled. Also, when I have to hang up three or four times to totally rearrange my schedule, she never takes offense. I really wish I didn't have to leave her hanging, but due to the fact that I am an average college kid - one who is involved in campus organizations, a commuter, but yet not in any sports programs or the honors program, I suffer from the "little fish in the pond" syndrome. As far as the administration and the registrar are concerned, I'm included in that certain group of people that is

equivalent to the last cup of coffee in the pot.

The thoughts for this editorial date back to spring break as I was travelling with 10 other students and a professor to Washington D.C. Along the way, I asked some of my fellow scholars what classes they were taking for next fall.

"Oh yeah, that's right, I have to schedule next Monday," was one student's reply. I soon heard the same statement echoed throughout the van. "Hmmm," I thought. "Did the schedule times change? Why so early this year?" When I asked the group why it was able to schedule so early, I was hit with either one of the following responses:

- 1) "Oh, I'm in the honors program."
- 2) "Yeah, I'm in the athletic program."

Stupid me. I thought that once I had left high school, all of the preferential treatment went with it. You know, when the football or basketball team brought home the state championship you had the next day off, or it was a big party? But for all of the other average Joes, perhaps kids who had perfect attendance; they received a piece of paper with their name botched up and the principal's signature on it - stamped, I might add.

Oh well, so now that I was informed that once again I was in a class struggle, I

sought to understand why this phenomenon held true in college as well. I learned the reason for the athletes' early scheduling is because they have practice. They have practice. I'm sorry, but I thought college was about preparing for the real world, not for playing collegiate sports. I have a job that I work 20-25 hours a week. Can I request to schedule early because I must make money to pay for my books and gas?

Understand, I am not seeking to ban college athletics; they do serve as a major part of school unity and promoting teamwork. At this point in my life, however, I am trying to achieve skills necessary to battle my way through today's society. I am not here to run, dribble a ball, or play catch.

I am an editor on the Behrend *Beacon* student newspaper and I am also involved with the Concert Band program. Interestingly, I have acquired a great deal of skills and have learned a lot about working within a team atmosphere, but it seems that this is not important to the administration. Sorry, if I were to say "I'm on a sports team" things would be different. I might just have been able to schedule Political Science 003 - a class that I will try to get into for the third time, as I enter fifth semester standing. That

It is unfortunate that the United States has a history in which such events as slavery, the Great Depression, and a Civil War have taken place. It's too bad that we have discriminated against women, Native Americans, blacks, and immigrants.

And if people were alive today that were enslaved, or lost land to the government, then we should owe them money.

African Americans today aren't slaves. They don't deal with the hardships that their ancestors had to deal with. There are laws today that protect African Americans from being discriminated against. That is the best we can do.

It's unfortunate that some African Americans weren't granted the same opportunities as white males during the days of slavery. But reparations from the government to people who never even witnessed the hardships that their ancestors faced isn't fair.

Should someone receive reparations because his great, great, great grandmother wasn't allowed to ask for a divorce if she was being beaten? No.

The government prevented women from doing great things as well as African Americans. Whose to say that someone's great, great, great grandmother couldn't have been a great political leader if the government just gave her the opportunity. This would have drastically changed the life of that person. She would have a better job now. So shouldn't she get money too? No, because she never earned it.

If we are paying reparations, we should be spending the money on living veterans of war, who lost opportunities in their own lives to defend this nation.

Every week, two editors from the staff will debate a topic that is hot. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to email suggestions for the hot topic. Send ideas to behrcoll2@aol.com

Proud to be a beautiful Yankee!



Coffee Talk
Kristin Rodgers

War. There has never been any disputing this fact in textbooks, so why does the Southern Confederacy still feel it won the war? I'll admit I live in the south. However, I was born and raised in Pennsylvania and have only been a resident of North Carolina for four years now.

So a few weeks back, and it is sad to imagine that Spring Break was weeks ago, a group of my friends and I headed to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. I had never been there, but I had traveled further south this past summer into Georgia. So why was this vacation so surprising? The locals in Myrtle Beach are straight out of a "Mulletville" calendar with one exception: they spoke with a sloppy southern accent. These people were not like the locals in North Carolina by any means, although I am

sure there has to be loopholes somewhere.

Because my parents live on the coast, I am very used to the 'local' versus 'tourist' hatred for one another. The locals hate the tourists and the tourists delve as far as they can into the personal lives of the locals. The locals have no interest in why tourists visit, they do not care what beach house you are staying at, they do not care how long you are visiting for—so long as you're out of town by September, and they don't care about how many years you have vacationed there because to the locals, tourist presence has spread the cemented world of McDonalds and surf shops. Now there is a concept, surfing on the Atlantic Ocean. Get a real job wannabe Pacific surfer dude.

Anyway, is there a point to this article? Probably not, but what I wish to make dazzlingly clear to all my readers (one) is that the locals in Myrtle Beach did give a damn about the tourists. I mean, every night some bar was offering no cover charge to the ladies. I was thrilled! Now, my friends and I chose to haul ourselves to one bar in particular each time we had the chance, but we did a little searching around at other bars and this is what I have figured out. The people in the bars (whether local, or worker, or possible strip

tease) are so ugly that if they do not offer incentives for us to come, they may get lonely. My general consensus is that the locals of Myrtle Beach have never left Myrtle Beach. Why should they when they do not have to? They can still be ugly and wait for people to show up because they have picked a warm location on the northern hemisphere.

So, I am proud to be a Yankee because I have yet to find one Southerner who is good looking. It is the Yankees who flock to your beaches because they are beautiful people, and 50 degrees to a Behrend student is like 90 degrees to a Southerner. What other college students would go to the beach wearing a swimsuit, while the locals are walking the beach in wool coats?

There is one disclaimer to this article. While vacationing in South Carolina, my friends and I came across a nice little fellow who talked like he had a mouth full of you know what. Well, it turns out that this gentleman did not like us too well. In fact, he made us pay for our services. Yes, that is right, he made us pay \$150 for going 72 in a 55. He couldn't handle us, that was all. He pulled us over and lied to us because he was in clear view of our license plates. Pennsylvania, this man thought. "Those darn Yankees think they can leave

without paying the mullets!" "Well, I'll show them, I'll pull two cars over at once!"

"Ha, ha, copper," we all screamed, "you managed to get two of us, but your missing eye caused you to overlook the third Yankee car in our sequence."

Due to the lack of readership for my column, my one (1) reader requested a little tune. Here it goes. "I'm sorry Bojangles, I can't eat here. The fries were good, but the chicken was cold, the biscuits were dry and the bread was old." Thank you to my hustler baby, I just wanted you to know!

I would like to conclude by expressing my most sincere condolences to Mr. Benjamin Kundman for the loss he experienced a few weeks ago, as stated in your column. Ben, I can feel your pain; skaters have to be some of the best looking boys! I think why most people may shutter at my comment is because they are ignorant to the fact that skateboarders are some of the most talented people in the nation. And for those people, I have one suggestion: pick up the latest copy of either "411," or "Destroying America," both videos will show an amateur just how the big boys do it out in San Francisco. Look on the bright side Ben—there is always next year.

Rodgers' column appears every three weeks.