

# Assisted Suicide: Advocate's death leaves ethical conundrum unanswered

BY CHERYL WANG  
Staff Writer

At 29 years old, she was diagnosed with brain cancer. The doctors told her she had only six months to live. The next six months however would not be ones filled with painless days and easy nights but rather with endless doctor visits, medical research and excruciating therapy.

Brittany Maynard was just beginning to experience her newlywed life and trying for a family but glioblastoma, the brain tumor, changed everything.

As if partial craniotomy and resection of her temporal lobe were not enough, the next step, she was told, would be full brain radiation that would remove all of her hair, leave first degree burns on her scalp and destroy her quality of life. Knowing this, Maynard looked into death with dignity.

Death with dignity is a law valid in only five states. It provides terminally-ill patients with less than six months to live the option of voluntarily self-administering lethal medications. This way, the patients may be allowed to consciously end their lives that are better laid to rest than afflicted with both the disease and the therapy side-effects. As a result of her unbearable condition, Brittany decided to seek assisted suicide.

However, the story behind a dignified death is anything but dignified. In order to obtain the lethal injection, Brittany had to uproot from California to Oregon where death with dignity is administered. Searching for a new home, applying for another driver's license, enlisting others to take care of her pets and house in California were just some of the tedious tasks that needed to be done.

Additionally, her husband decided to give up his job in order to follow her to Oregon. While the process was gruesome, Brittany was determined to seize her last chance at making her life as human as possible.

"The vast majority of families do not have the flexibility, resources and time to make all these changes" Brittany stated in her article to CNN, however she believed that "to die on [her] own terms" is better than "to suffer for weeks or month in tremendous amounts of physical and emotional pain."

After moving to Oregon, Brittany's adamant belief in the rights of the terminally ill to end their own lives became the platform for her campaign.

To share her story as well as support other patients, Brittany became an active advocate for Compassions and Choices, a non-profit organization that strives to expand the choices at the end of life. Ultimately, Brittany created the Brittany Maynard Foundation that aims to "expand the death-with-dignity to all," to transform her story to one of hope for others.

During her lifetime, Brittany has traveled to Vietnam, summited Kilimanjaro, taught at Nepal, worked in Costa Rica and ice climbed in Ecuador. As an undergraduate student at UC Berkeley with a Masters of Education from UC Irvine, she envisioned a bright future.

After dating him for five years, Brittany finally married her husband Daniel Diaz a year before her diagnosis. Together, they own a small Beagle, a Great Dane and a heart filled with faith. She upheld her belief to live her life even in the darkest of times when she was found trekking 10-mile trails in Alaska only a few months after her diagnosis.

Brittany passed away on Nov. 1, 2014. However, her desire to support others like her lives on. The thought that death can give birth to a legacy of hopes for others is both bitter and ironic but that is exactly what Brittany has achieved.

While glioblastoma may destroy her body, she refused to let it sit on her mind and eat away her life. People have the right to live their lives the way they want or not at all; it is not suicidal but rather an act of free will. The debate over the ethics of assisted suicide has been a long-time issue.

However, this reflects exactly a culture that is, at its core, fearful of death and unwilling to face uncertainty. So to the critics of her decision, Brittany embraces her fate and instead asks, "Why should anyone have the right to make [the choice to prolong my life] for me?"

In her last words, Brittany reminds us that "it is people who pause to appreciate life and give thanks who are happiest. If we change our thought, we change our world."

Facts compiled from: The Brittany Fund and CNN

# #Dearwhitepeople breeds firestorm on reverse racism

BY RICHARD ONG  
Editor-in-Chief

Near the end of October, #dearwhitepeople took root in the Twitter accounts of many NCSSM students.

The hashtag was in reference to the movie "Dear White People", a satirical comedy released Oct. 17 about race in America today. The hashtag brought about a discussion of racism and reverse racism here at NCSSM.

Racism is defined as "the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics or abilities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races."

Reverse racism is defined as "a condition in which discrimination against a dominant racial group in a society has taken place."

Racism has sometimes been referred to as "a thing in the past," and something irrelevant in modern discourse, which is a point made by a white character

in the film. Martin Luther King Jr. once said "The moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

The idea that racism in America is diminishing is fallacious and woefully simplistic. In his book "Two Nations", Andrew Hacker points out the disparity between white and black America, both economically and educationally.

Black unemployment rates are consistently double white unemployment rates, and nearly 60% of black youth are unemployed; correspondingly, 45% of black children live in poverty in America, compared with 16% of white children.

Currently, there are more black men incarcerated than in college. This is merely the tip of the iceberg. The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights released statistics for the 2011-2012 school year.

Black students were three times as likely to be expelled as white students, and less than half of Native American students

attended schools which offered a full range of science and math courses.

According to the NAACP, African Americans are incarcerated six times more often than whites, and 1 million of the 2.3 million prisoners in America are black.

Five times more white Americans report to using drugs than black Americans, yet African-Americans are incarcerated at a rate 10 times higher than whites.

So while white Americans might not believe black Americans are inferior because

minorities in America are oppressed.

While Latino and Native American demographics experience conditions similar to African Americans, but to a lesser magnitude (Native American demographics perform worse in certain areas), Asian Americans have done the opposite.

According to the 2000 U.S. census, Indian, Chinese, Korean and Japanese Americans receive college degrees at a higher rate than whites, receive advanced degrees at a higher rate than whites, and have higher



Rev. Al Sharpton and protestors march to end NYPD's discriminatory Stop and Frisk program. According to the NYCLU, in 2013 56% of those stopped were black, and 88% were totally innocent.

Photo courtesy of The Washington Post

of their skin tone, they are clearly better because of it. The scales are tipped in favor of white people across the board.

In light of the evidence, the question of reverse racism seems ridiculous.

While individuals might hold prejudice against white people, the validity of which is a discussion for a later time, society clearly does not.

Reverse racism, like voting fraud and the war on Christmas, is virtually nonexistent in America and should be ignored while we confront real issues.

There is however, an exception to the rule that

median family incomes.

Asian Americans outside this demographic, such as Cambodian, Filipino and Vietnamese Americans, are statistically similar to other first generational immigrant groups.

While not every minority in the United States experiences systematic disadvantages because of race, the vast majority of them do, which is a significant problem in a nation espousing egalitarian ideals and crusading through sovereign nations in the name of equality and democracy and freedom.

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