

Legally, I'm conflicted about Jussie Smollett Situation

By Julie Carter
Opinion Editor

Over the past weeks, we as a nation were bombarded with news about Jussie Smollett's alleged hate crime that turned out to be a farce. Initially, Smollett was charged with disorderly conduct amongst other charges. When prosecutors decided to drop all charges against the "Empire" actor, the nation's jaw collectively hit the floor.

Cook County state's attorney Kim Foxx said the charges were dropped due to a lack of enough evidence to secure a conviction for Smollett and that she wanted to focus on bigger crime within the city of Chicago.

The aspect of wanting to focus on larger crime within the city of Chicago is easy enough for me to understand as well as calls that Smollett could not receive a fair trial after all the media exposure. Even if I accepted all that, I am still troubled by the decision to drop all charges against Smollett.

With the charges being dropped, it sends a clear message to Chicago as well as the rest of the nation as a whole: we don't care about those who file false police reports. Now, everything Smollett did is still up for speculation, but the evidence against him is rather daunting for anyone to stomach.

Smollett's alleged attackers were found with a check that Smollett had given them. This denotes that this is hardly a random act of hate violence.

Smollett's actions also make it that much harder for every victim of a hate crime to be taken seriously. People will begin to ask: is this just another Smollett incident? Smollett should be the punished exception, not the guideline by which we treat every other victim.

We as the public must hold ourselves to a higher standard, and we should expect the same of our criminal justice system. I believe in the system, but this is a serious lapse in judgement.



Smollett addresses the hate crime allegations during a press conference.

'No' never means 'maybe'

By Kenny Cheek
Staff Writer

Peer pressure is something that we hear throughout all of our lives, whether it has to do with cheating on a test, drinking until blacking out and especially when it comes to relationships.

The phrase "no means no" obviously never means yes. This is true when it comes to literally anything. So why do people press you when you say no? When does "no thanks" transfer into "maybe, but you can try and convince me?"

People do not just experience this in affectionate relationships; this can happen in friendships, family relationships and so much more.

If you have a friend that you have asked to do something, and he or she has said no, then what is the point in asking again when you have already heard their answer? Unless you are hard

of hearing, there is no excuse.

"In high school, I had this friend who would ask me to go to parties often. I am not that type of person, so I always said no, but she would persist and try to persuade me," Savannah Jones said. "I just quit talking to her."

This type of persistence may seem cute to people who think of it as just playful and an attempt to broaden their friend's eyes to the world that they do not want to enter, but to the rest of the world, it is annoying, and makes people think that their words hold no weight.

Despite what most people think, not everyone shares the same interests. Not everyone enjoys partying, hiking, drinking, driving, singing, going out or whatever activity you force them to agree to.

In fact, this can ruin a friendship rather quickly. It does matter to the person you ask as to whether or not you consider their feelings when you continuously bombard them with the

same question only to receive the same never ending answer.

As for family, it gets harder and harder when you are busy with college, work and life in general to go along with whatever your parents force you into.

"Everytime I'm home, my mom asks me to play my oboe for the church. I don't go to church, and I don't like playing in front of people. Every single time I tell her no, but she has been asking me for years," Rachel Gunnis explained. "It gets really tedious."

This strain on a relationship can lead to arguments and heated discussions often when parents think they still have ultimate authority over you when you finally gain independence.

The next time you ask a friend, family member, coworker or whoever to go out and do something, and they respond with a no, try to consider their emotions. Ask once, then accept the answer. It really is not that hard.

NO MEANS NO.