

Viewpoint

It has happened again. Taking Americans by complete surprise, two students allegedly belonging to a group known as the "Black Trenchcoat Mafia" invaded the supposedly safe grounds of Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado and went on a rampage.

News releases informed millions to the events that unfolded on Tuesday, and once again brought the issue of teen angst gone wild to the media forefront. Unfortunately, the people of America keep getting surprised by tragedies such as these.

Are you ready for the real news flash? This is not to be taken lightly folks: Americans, specifically children, are royally messed up in the head.

Yes, you read it right. These "Trenchcoat Mafia" kids are no different than any mentally disturbed child who just happens to have access to several automatic weapons, pipe bombs and live grenades.

Our culture provides these kids with excuses. MSNBC's non-stop coverage of the "Tragedy in Colorado," claimed that television and movie violence may be partially to blame for the events that occurred. Now really, how many people are driven to tie pipe-bombs to their chest and unload a few clips on their peers by watching re-runs of "Gilligan's Island?"

The problem here is not violence in the media, but rather the lack of parental supervision. Now don't get me wrong, I am not saying that single or non-nuclear families are to blame for the degradation of American society. I myself spent a portion of my childhood in a single family and I never ran through my school blowing away those people who I didn't happen to like at the time. My mother would not have let that happen. I was lucky enough to have a strong upbringing. That is the key to returning moral and ethical practices to society.

Schools are not responsible for raising children, and contrary to what the great Hillary Clinton said, it does not take a village to raise a child. It takes a family, one of any size.

So where do we stand as a culture? I guess the bottom line is that Americans are messed up. Until that changes at every level of society, things like the Columbine High School massacre are going to keep happening.

• Chris Rash Opinions Editor

Diversity in colleges must be valued

Across our country, public higher education is coming under attack. In November of 1996, the voters of the state of California voted to ban all gender, color, ethnic and race-based affirmative action programs in public higher education. Since the passage of that state constitutional amendment, the number of minority students, particularly blacks and Hispanics, has decreased dramatically.

California is not alone in this move to ban affirmative action programs. Texas, Washington and several other states have either banned the use of affirmative action or will consider it over the next few years.

Whether you agree or not with the premise of giving preference to a certain underrepresented group, everyone should advocate creating diversity in our colleges and universities. If using affirmative action is the best method for creating diversity, then we must keep it.

So why diversity? What should we care if we learn alongside people who are like us or if we learn with people from different backgrounds and cultures? This is becoming an increasingly easy question to answer.

With many student institutions' affirmative action policies coming under attack, there have been numerous studies conducted which outline the benefits for creat-

ing a diverse atmosphere in college and universities.

Dr. Patricia Gurin, conducted research on this very subject in defense of the University of Michigan's use of racially and ethnically diverse classrooms, they learn better because their long-held beliefs and ideas are challenged. Much of what we should

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The Pendulum

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experience in college we should learn through our peers who came from different backgrounds than our own.

Even more important than creating an atmosphere to learn alongside someone of a different background, there is a more pressing societal need to create a diverse atmosphere in higher education. Dr. Gurin's research continues to suggest that students who learn with others from different races, will be more inclined to live, work and socialize with those same people.

She even suggests that we can decrease our society's pattern of segregation if we create more diversity on campus. If students learn and live with students of different races and ethnic groups while in college, those same students will

continue after college to live and learn with people who are ethnically and racially different from them.

What we need to realize is that we can not view affirmative action anymore as giving preference to blacks and not whites. That is not what affirmative action in higher education is intended to do.

Affirmative action in higher education is about admitting students who can create the needed diversity that will prove essential in our increasingly diverse society.

Colleges admit athletes or student performers because of their extraordinary talent. Colleges admit these students based not solely on merit, but on what they can contribute to the college. Why can't we use race-based affirmative action because of what those students can contribute?

At Elon College we are blessed, like many other private institutions, because we can use special means to create diversity. I hope Elon College continues to benefit from this luxury in continuing to create a more diverse atmosphere.

Elon College has come a long way in creating diversity, but we can still make improvements.



THE PENDULUM

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Speaking of ... Faculty/Staff

Who is your favorite faculty/staff member and what makes them special to you?



Adrien Stern, freshman:

Bob Anderson, he actually makes me want to do my work. I really enjoy going to class and learning about our world. He makes me want to make a difference.

Kim Rogers, freshman: Dr. Fortune is great. He genuinely cares about his students and would do anything to make sure they succeed.



Emily Schlaman, sophomore:

Dr. Wilson, because he makes his classes fun. He allows discussions in his classes and that's what I find most interesting.

Latoya Rose, sophomore:

Dr. Vick. Because I feel like his door is always open. He is the kind of teacher who teaches so the students learn, not for the grades they receive.



Rebecca Gorley, freshman:

I would have to say my Elon 101 Advisor Tait Arend because not only is he an excellent adviser and an extremely caring individual, most of the girls at Elon would probably agree with me in saying that he is a great looking guy too.

Kristen Carter, freshman:

Dr. Vick. He is an awesome guy. He always makes himself available to his students.

compiled and photographed by Chris Rash