

What to do and say if you are arrested by police

College students often don't realize their rights when faced with punishment

America is a prosperous country with several advantageous opportunities. As a legal citizen, we are endowed with certain rights that cannot be sacrificed.

Our ancestors and forefathers risked their lives for the privileges we enjoy today.

We are protected by these rights at every moment of our lives, whether we are aware of it or not.

But it is not enough to have these rights; you must also know what they are and how they can benefit you in a particular situation.

You must know when you can exercise your rights, and when to remain silent. Without such knowledge, your rights protect you about as much as an American flag T-shirt will protect you from terrorists.

American constitutional rights are not sentimental morality statements, but real-life freedoms that

can mean the difference between which side of the steel bars you may one day be looking through.

Police officers know your rights. More significantly, they know if you aren't aware of them.

Always remember that police officers are trying to do a job.

If they feel that some kind of crime is being committed, they will do what is necessary to investigate, even if it means grinding the rights of unknowledgeable college students under their boots.

Your rights are not violated unless you are aware of them and know when to stick by them.

Otherwise, police officers are doing their job to the best of their ability. I've compiled a list of



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important things to know about your rights, as well as a few “dos” and “don'ts.”

What you say and what you don't say to police is of the utmost importance.

What you say can be used against you and may give police an excuse to arrest you.

You do not have to answer any questions, and your best bet is to stay quiet, polite, and respectful at all times.

Although you must show an officer your driver's license and registration when stopped in a car, you cannot be legally arrested for refusing to identify yourself to a police officer in any other situation.

You do not have to consent to a search of yourself, your car, or your home at any time.

If police say they have a search warrant, ask to see it.

Police may “pat down” your clothing if they suspect you might have a concealed weapon, but you must make it very clear that you do not consent to any further search.

You cannot be legally arrested for refusing to consent to a search.

If you are under arrest, you have the right to know why. Ask.

Police can search the area “close by” you in the event you are arrested. If you are in a building this usually means the room that you are in, but nothing more.

We all have the right to courteous and respectful police treatment, in any situation.

If you feel that your rights have been violated, remember to stay calm and allow the incident to run its course, despite how hard that may seem at the time.

Don't run, don't complain, don't resist and don't argue.

Remember officers' badge and patrol car numbers, and write down everything as soon as possible.

Wait until you have an opportunity to speak to a lawyer before making a complaint that your rights have been violated.

It is important not to exacerbate an already delicate situation.

Sit calm, stay alert, and hopefully, you'll stay out of trouble.

Information in this column was from the American Civil Liberties Union. Contact Ryan Costello at pendulum@elon.edu or 278-7247.

‘Dummies’ series tries to teach us about how to live our lives

When I first discovered “Dummies” literature, I couldn't help but laugh.

“Dummies” literature is a collection of books that attempt to provide a little information about a variety of topics.

Call it cynicism, but as I didn't see “Amelie” after I found out that she'll (allegedly) change your life, I found it a little hard to take the term of endearment attached to these books in stride.

While picking up a book called “Homebuying for Dummies” is one thing, how many copies of “Sex for Dummies” do you think sell everyday? Enough for a second edition apparently.

Another thing which struck me early on was what qualifies you to be a writer for a particular “Dummies” book?

Again, while finding someone to write on the finer points of Shakespeare should be relatively straightforward, how does one

find an authority to pen “Family Reunion Planning Kit for Dummies?”

It's like an ad I saw, advertising the services of a professional “life coach.”

I was intrigued. Here was someone offering to coach me on how to live my life better and more effectively.

Time management, event planning, meditation, the list of services is endless. Life coaches, Dummies books on every topic available. What next?

It seems today we spend so much time on introspective thinking and worrying about what's going on in our lives, we can't see what's going on around us.

It's almost as if we're looking for ways to make things difficult.

While we are lucky enough to not have to worry too much about war, famine or natural disasters, we've somehow managed to back ourselves into a corner.

True, life these days is com-

plex, some say the most complex it's ever been.

But it doesn't take a dummy to figure out that that's the catch cry of every generation. I'd like to think we're all simple creatures at heart, but we apparently want to make things difficult for ourselves.

Human nature?

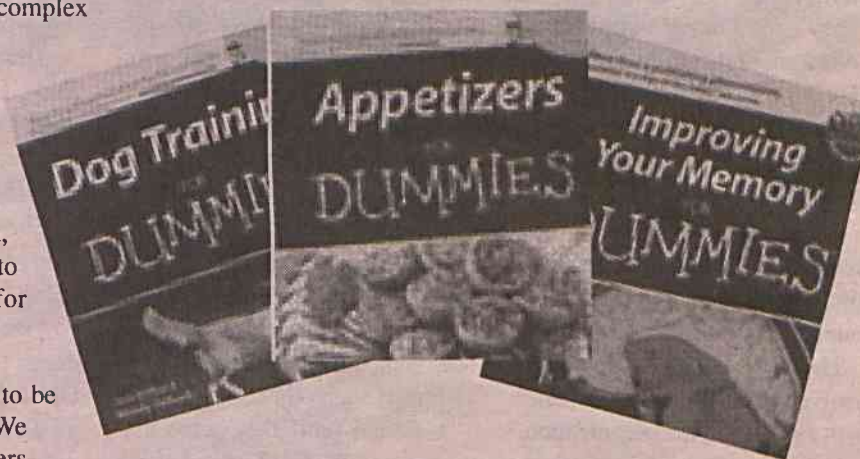
Perhaps, but we seem to be getting carried away. We don't need to pay others money to learn how to simplify our lives and get the most out of our bread machine, fear not — “Bread Machines for Dummies” has the answers!

All jokes aside, what are we telling ourselves?

Perhaps we need to step back and look at things a bit.

By not taking things so seriously, we'd probably end up learning more than we imagine.

Sure, we could learn a little more about how to choose a



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dog, how to be better at PlayStation or the finer points of dating.

But if you have your health, a place to lay your head and people who love you, can life really be that bad?

And if it is, I think I can still dig up the number of that life coach for you.

Either that or you can buy a copy of my new book, “How to Not Be an Ungrateful Twit for Dummies.”

I think I've got a best seller here.

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