

Palestinian student(s) express gratitude for the Guilford community's response to the Bryan incident

Ebony and ivory live together in perfect harmony... There is good and bad in everyone, We learn to live, we learn to give Each other what we need to survive together alive.
-Paul McCartney

My side of the "story" has not been told. As a Palestinian, I am expected to feel disappointed, angry and unsafe at Guilford, yet events that have occurred these past few weeks have made it clear to me that I belong here.

"Guilford and the surrounding communities have been very caring and helpful," said Palestinian student Faris Khader. "Their support helped us handle this situation much better than we would have alone. I am so thankful for this community."

Since I was not a witness of the Bryan incident, I will not make any statements regarding it, nor will I share any preconceived notions or

draw any conclusions about the incident itself.

Many of us like to believe that as a Quaker school that preaches diversity, peace, equality, and non-violence, Guilford is, or should be, an embodiment of the dream of "Ebony and Ivory."

Over the past few weeks, this idealistic perception of Guilford has proven to be a myth and has forced many to face the realities of racism and violence all over the world.

It is naive to believe that, since this is a Quaker school, all students, professors and staff members are accepting and peaceful, because racism and prejudices are a part of every community.

The reality of racism is inevitable, and I have not yet known of a place that is free from prejudices or hate. Expecting such perfection is, at the least, unfair to the Guilford community.

I, too, believe that I should have the right to live in an anti-racist, non-violent environment, but when we

expect perfection from this community, we will be dismayed and disappointed.

Furthermore, occurrences that confirm Guilford's vulnerability will weaken us as a community if we do not expect them and actively seek to cure the root of the problem

by making it our responsibility to be prejudice-free in all circumstances.

I'm sure that some of us are closer to making this dream a reality than others. But the truth is that as "racists" or "non-racists," we share the same reality, and it is time to stop labeling others and ourselves.

"This incident should not hurt the relationships between students, especially athletes and non-athletes,"

Khader said.

"We should not judge people based on their social group," said fellow Palestinian student Osama Sabah. "A person's character is what matters."

When any incident of racism occurs, it is very easy to point fingers and blame a certain side because they are "racists," after all. Not only does this not help solve the problem, but also this makes everyone of us who judges them a hypocrite.

Ignorance and fear are the roots of racism. If we alienate ourselves from those who have racist sentiments (keep in mind, I am not referring to anyone in particular), we allow them to hate, and we contribute greatly to the creation of a

communication barrier between "us" and "them."

I, like everyone else, am not free from prejudices, and I will openly admit that the Bryan incident and some responses angered me and made me feel unwelcome here. Then I realized that bitterness and anger are counterproductive.

Once I made it a point to overlook some negative aspects of this community, I noticed a great amount of positive characteristics that make the Guilford community special. Therefore, saving the face of Guilford is unnecessary, because Guilford and what the students stand for are clearer now than ever before.

Where else does a diverse group of students unite in a peace vigil? Where else do individuals make it their responsibility to better the environment around them? Where else are students so eager to hear "the other side"? Where else do people from opposite sides feel closer after expressions of

hate?

I'm sure these responses exist elsewhere, but we must never take them for granted. I cannot speak for the administrative processes (I have not dealt with them directly to completely trust their commitment to fairness, etc.), but as for the Guilford community, I generally see individuals who are loving, caring, and warm.

"I hope that this incident will raise awareness in Guilford," Khader said. "And that we can all work together and learn from past experiences, so we can promote peace and love in our community."

Bad things happen, but we shouldn't be too quick to judge the offenders because, after all, there is good and bad in everyone, or in the words of Quakers everywhere, I truly and ardently believe that "There is that of God in everyone."

Deena Zaru

The dangers of 24

Jack Bauer's back on the job for truth, justice and Fox's ratings

REID CRANFILL | STAFF WRITER

Cracks of gunfire, the beat of rolling drums and nuclear explosions in my living room can only mean that Jack is back.

If Jerry Bruckheimer produced "Die Hard," he'd end up with the show 24. Each hour is a violent, stylishly directed guilty pleasure that never backs down. Every week, Jack Bauer and counter terrorists somehow avert imminent terrorist attacks - at any cost. Jack will shoot an innocent woman, torture his own brother, or bite out a guard's throat at the drop of a hat to get the job done.

The show grabs you like a cheap date and is so addictive it should come with a prescription. This could be a problem, because no matter what you do, you should never, ever, take 24 too seriously.

24 touches on some very sensitive issues with the sort of false sensitivity Fox thrives on.

From Jack's black-prison-style tortures to internment camps for Islamic Americans, the show deals with very poignant problems in American society with as much subtlety as Bruce Campbell performing an appendectomy with a chainsaw.

Each prefabricated character runs the wheel of their stereotype for most of the show, no matter how black the plot of 24 or how close it hits to home. Either a change in plot, or an impromptu speech by the president to his advisors, leaves us feeling assuaged of all remorse - and certainly never responsible for the things in the world of 24 that reflect our own.

In Jack Bauer's America, our enemies have infiltrated every level of our society. A mushroom cloud over Valencia justifies all actions by the state to keep us safe, the Constitution be damned. Without the will of Jack Bauer to keep us safe, the

terrorists surely would have already won.

That is a dangerous, scary line of thinking for anyone to take seriously.

But wait. What WMDs? What terror attacks? Jack Bauer's America has had two black presidents who actually listen to their intelligence advisors. The government instantly responds to massive national catastrophes with enough manpower. The show may seem realistic and gritty, but it's not an honest evaluation of America for better or ill.

Like a funhouse mirror, the show's warped reflection of America is funny more than it is tragic.

24 is best taken with a big grain of salt - and maybe a shot of tequila. Despite its Monday night time slot, the 24 drinking game remains popular, and the Internet is full of Chuck Norris-style jokes like, "If Jack Bauer's gun jams, it's because he wants to beat you with it." Beneath the cheap veneer of



ILLUSTRATION BY CHARLIE CLAY

IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE, IT'S ANTI-TERRORIST JACK BAUER FROM THE INCONGRUOUS HIT SHOW 24.

hot-button issues, 24 still stays true to being a guy's action TV show - and should be given the same gravity as an episode of

Walker, Texas Ranger.

Somewhere next Monday, someone will be taking 24 too seriously. Once Jack's done defusing a

suitcase bomb, we'll have him stop by to change their minds - they're ruining the fun for the rest of us.