

Letter to the Editor: No Easy Day publication presents no easy decisions

RESPONSE TO "FORMER NAVY SEAL'S POOR DECISION MAY BRING LAWSUIT" PUBLISHED IN ISSUE 3

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Despite Haejin Song's description of former Navy SEAL Matt Bissonette's decision to publish a first-hand account of his part in the raid that killed Osama bin Laden as "poor" (see the Sept. 14 Guilfordian, pg. 10 - Vol. 99:Issue 4), I believe his decision shows courage and should instead be praised. Though I have not read the book, I believe that the act of publishing his personal account should be lauded as exemplar of democratic citizenship, instead of lambasted as 'anti-American' and 'subversive.' While Ms. Song does not go this far in her Guilfordian opinion article (9/14/12 Guilfordian), her statements assume, along with much of the American public discourse about Bissonette's publication of No Easy Day, that national security somehow trumps all else when it comes to putting competing ideas in the public sphere. Such opinions underscore the extent to which the 'securitization' of our life, world and worldview has occurred in this country. Just as important as Dana Priest's and William Arkin's acclaimed reporting on the "hidden world" of "Top Secret America" (i.e. the U.S. Government's growing security apparatus) in 2010 (see Washington Post, July 19-21, 2010), the seemingly more benign discursive forms of speech we use everyday have just as critical a role to play in the security regime we construct and maintain. In a truly deliberative democratic state shouldn't a diversity of stories about historical events be encouraged and discussed?

By stories, I do not mean what we commonly conceive of stories as subjective accounts that do not provide clarity or deepen understanding about critical historical or political events. Instead, by stories I am talking about humankind's primary means of meaning making. Stories, as far from simply subjective — and therefore meaningless — for making change, are instead the best means to challenge the security state, and concomitant 'securitization' mindset, that we all now live in complex relationship towards. As parts of wider discourse, stories, or narratives, in the words of Francesca Polletta "smuggle explanation into description, thus obscuring the fact that what came before a particular development may not be responsible for it" (Polletta, 2006, 182). In the case of Mr. Bissonette's account, don't the wide circulation of narrative accounts help us to make meaning out of confusing events? Don't such authoritative accounts help to control the tendency to jump to the conclusion that there is one correct or 'true' account of a series of events and thus to the unquestioning assumptions that some 'True' account justifies our actions?

While interpretation can certainly be tricky, the political opportunity space provided by alternative accounts of what we might consider common storylines allows for a collective and deliberative re-telling of our national discourse. Like many who read this, I was shocked at the outpouring of nationalism the night that bin Laden was publicly pronounced dead by our leaders. If we are to change our national discourse about terror and the all-invasive need for security we must demand alternative stories from which to fashion new meaning.

The publication of Mr. Bissonette's narrative account adds one more account to our attempt at meaning making, and one more account is better than none.

Has the American dream become disabled?

In 1931, James Truslow Adams, a popular historian, coined the phrase "American dream" in his book "The Epic of America." He defined America's dream as a better, richer and happier life for all our citizens.



BY BRYAN DOOLEY
SENIOR WRITER

For Americans with disabilities, however, achieving this dream is nearly impossible. According to the American Association of People with Disabilities, 78 percent of people with disabilities remain unemployed.

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Vocational Rehabilitation program exists to guarantee equal access to employment for equally qualified individuals. However, the programs do not address the attitude of many employers.

"The major drawback in almost every employment-related program is that the focus is not placed on educating the employers," said Jim Whalen, executive director of the Adaptables, a Center for Independent Living in Winston-Salem. "In today's era of technology and workplace variety, it is truly employer

and co-worker attitudes that create the 'real' barriers."

In addition to workplace inadequacies, the government's position on disabilities is also out of date.

As a Social Security Income recipient, I know the program is designed to help support people with disabilities in times when they cannot work. But in reality, people can only qualify for SSI if they are impoverished.

For instance, when I get a job, I lose all my government support, including access to health care. These are disincentives to work. I am not alone in this difficult situation. Most people with disabilities share this experience.

The New York Times reported the example of Mr. Crelia, an SSI recipient who wants to work. A recipient of \$506 monthly from the SSI program, he is allowed to earn \$85 through work, while also receiving some assistance toward his rent and food expenses. If he surpasses the \$85, his check is reduced by \$1 for every \$2 he earns.

If his income reaches \$1,097 a month, he will no longer be eligible for any cash SSI benefits at all. So he must be poor, or he must give up all government support. Mr. Crelia is never permitted to have more than \$2,000 in the bank. This restriction places the trappings of

a middle-class life — a car, a modest home, a family — far out of reach.

So where is his American dream? It makes no sense for Americans to continue in this system.

"If you went to an employer and said, 'We have a group of people who are well trained, often pre-screened, used to working collaboratively as well as showing creativity in getting things done — but you cannot hire any of them,'" Whalen asked, "How do you think employers would react? In short, in a competitive marketplace we cannot afford to discount any resource."

In many ways, I and many other people with disabilities represent the American dream.

I have been in some form of school since the age of two, improving myself through education. I have won numerous scholarships over the course of my academic career. I have earned a chance to have a job and be a productive member of American society."

However, the current system prevents me from working and having a savings account, things non-disabled people do not have second thoughts about. These two things are essential elements of achieving the American dream.

And everyone deserves the same chance to achieve the American dream.

Error loading page: Internet too slow

We've all been there: relentlessly pressing the "refresh" button on the computer screen, hoping that, this time, the page will actually load, cursing yourself as the panic sets in that your assignment will be late because Moodle refuses to open, or desperately trying to Google something in order to do research for a paper.



BY NATALIE SUTTON
STAFF WRITER

It's no secret that the Guilford Internet can be extremely aggravating for both students and faculty.

"The Internet here is really inefficient for me to get any work done in a good amount of time because I'm constantly worrying about how slow the Internet is and not about what I'm writing," said senior Leia Gaskin-Sadiku. "It's really frustrating."

When it was time for midterms this semester, the Internet really took a turn for the worse. The Moodle page wouldn't load at all and neither would any other Guilford-related Web pages.

During one of the most pertinent times for a dependable Internet, many students found that pages like Facebook and Twitter would load, but they were unable to log onto Moodle to download any needed material.

The Internet problems cause frustration amongst faculty as well because they are often just as reliant on the Web as students are.

"I'm a professor who uses technology as a crucial part of my courses," said Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre Studies Chad Phillips. "I have found it difficult to be rigid with assignment deadlines when there are internet connectivity problems and updates and outages to Moodle, where it is not only unreliable, but the interface is often too complicated for many non-traditional students."

Many times teachers are unable to efficiently use the Internet in class, and it can be frustrating for everyone.

"The lack of good internet is disruptive in class because teachers often try to pull up YouTube videos or links, and it just takes forever," said senior Adelaide Ayers. "Some students even come to my house off-campus during exam times to do work because they're unable to do so on

campus."

It seems ridiculous that students would feel the need to go off campus in order to do school work, yet many find there is no other option if they want to be able to finish tasks in a reasonable timeframe.

So who's really to blame for all the frustration?

Many people find it easy to blame IT&S and their office is constantly flooded with complaints about internet issues, but according to Ian Hulsey, level II support technician help desk, solving internet inefficiency is one of their main goals, and they work on improving the server constantly.

"It's one of our number one priorities to stabilize the infrastructure of the campus network ... so that includes everybody being able to get online, everybody being able to get to what they need to get to, and to most of what they want to get to," said Hulsey.

The unfortunate Internet shutdown during midterms was completely out of IT&S' control.

"We have had some hardware issues in the past several weeks that haven't been planned obviously," said Hulsey. "It's definitely not something we're unaware of. We're super aware of it because it keeps us from doing what we need to do too."

While it is good to hear that IT&S is doing their best to solve the issues, I'm still not convinced that we will see any significant changes.

Unfortunately, every semester I've attended Guilford, I've heard countless complaints about the internet and every semester, I've heard countless promises for a better, faster internet, yet I've still not seen any kind of improvement.

Maybe instead of dropping loads of money in trivial areas, such as the construction of a fish tank in the Quakeria, or yet another flat-screened TV in the Grill, Guilford should work on providing a satisfactory Internet for its students and faculty. Perhaps our resources should be going into more essential realms of an educational environment.

Considering the fact that a dependable internet connection is imperative in today's academic setting, I do hope that Guilford will put fixing this issue at the top of its priority list and actually generate some kind of improvement before we all pull our hair out.