

Opinion

"No Means No"? Not in N.C.

By Sarah Powell, Contributing Writer

We are told that when it comes to consent, "no means NO." Title IX states, "When a student has experienced a hostile environment such sexual assault or severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive sexual harassment, schools must stop the discrimination, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects." Even society tells us, as women, have the right to say "no" at any time during intercourse and if the partner continues, it's rape. Right? Wrong, at least in North Carolina.

It is hard to know which year we are living in when it comes to rape because there is no such thing as saying "no" if, at first, a woman says "yes," according to NC law. In 1979, the Supreme Court of North Carolina ruled in *State v. Way*, "if the actual penetration is accomplished with the

woman's consent, the accused is not guilty of rape," even if she says no at any moment during sex. The state still has not overturned this 41-year-old court case ruling. Why are we the *only* state with this type of standard?

Senator Jeff Jackson has been working for the past four years to change this law and has introduced legislation to amend the law. Senate Bill 553, Sen. Jackson's Revoke Consent for Intercourse Bill, would make it a crime for anyone to continue to "engage in sexual intercourse after consent is withdrawn." Moreover, the proposed amendment is worded in a way that includes all forms of intercourse; victims would no longer be limited to just women. SB 553 has yet to make it out of the Senate Rules Committee. Last year, it was pushed to the back

burner for the third year in a row.

It is hard to believe that anyone could seriously defend this law, but it has still been applied in recent cases. This past year, a woman testified against her estranged husband after he showed up at her apartment drunk, demanding she have sex with him. As she told WRAL News, since he was getting angry she figured it would be safer to agree to the sex. When it got violent and she begged him to stop, he wouldn't. In every other state, he would've been charged with rape and served a much longer sentence. But because of the 1979 ruling, his charges were lowered to misdemeanor assault on a female, to which he pleaded guilty and served a 10-month sentence. The perpetrator can be charged with other related crimes, but not rape.

Even if things get ugly, even if things get violent, even if someone gets hurt, once consent is given... there's no stopping it, legally.

This is not the first case to highlight the loophole in the 1979 N.C. Supreme Court ruling. Numerous cases have produced the same outcome: a lesser sentence for the perpetrator. There is an unambiguous ethical obligation to change this law and bring more awareness to it. It is important that we are aware of our rights and that we seek to uphold our rights. There is no reason for this law to remain for another day, let alone another year or two. North Carolina needs to change this law and implement a new one, one where "no" actually means "no," at every point.

The Easiest Language

By Cro Owens, Staff Writer

A while back, I saw a post online that read something like, "English beats up other languages in back alleys and rifles through their pockets for loose grammar." Having now studied four different languages, I really can't argue. But what, I have been repeatedly asked, is the easiest language to study of those I've learned? The conversation and my reasoning is difficult at best: modern Greek comes naturally to me, since I've been studying it since I was 11. The alphabet and pronunciation aren't difficult, but nouns take one of three genders...a weird concept if you speak English. For example, a chair is just a chair in English. In Greek, a chair is a feminine word and you use a different word for "the" if you want to say "the chair." Η καρέκλα.

I started Arabic a year-and-a-half ago, and the alphabet is brutal. Each letter has four different forms—for example, the letter "gh" looks like ġ by itself, ġ at the beginning of a word, ġ in the middle of a word and ġ at the end of a word. The

script is cursive, so the letters have to connect—and some connect to letters on both sides, others on only one side and some don't connect at all. The connection is often what tells you what letter it actually is: a long "a" sound and an "l" will have the same shape in the middle of a word, but the long "a" will not connect to the letter on the left side. That's the only way to know.

I just started studying Chinese this semester. If you google it, you'll find Mandarin Chinese on lists of both the hardest and easiest languages to learn. What makes it easy is that there is no verb conjugation—no "I go, she goes, I went" business. It's always just "go" and you can put words like yesterday or tomorrow nearby to show if it's past or future tense or a pronoun in front to show who is doing it. The language (as far as I have learned it) is quite simple. What's not so simple? Pronunciation. I still don't know how to pronounce some of the sounds, and it's a tonal language,

meaning that the inflection of your voice changes the meaning of a word. "Ma" can mean mother, hemp, horse or scold, depending on the way you pronounce it. The Chinese character system is what tends to scare people the most, though. While the Arabic alphabet is complicated and cursive, Chinese simply doesn't have one.

There are some characters that are vaguely pictographic and if you know what the symbols in a larger character mean you might be able to dissect its meaning (though rarely its pronunciation). But ultimately, you have to memorize how to write every individual word in the Chinese dictionary to become fluent.

I went to Kenya last summer and therefore studied a bit of Swahili—by far the easiest on this list for an English-speaker. There's no new alphabet, easy to pronounce, fun to pronounce (my favorite word in Swahili is bell pepper—pilipili hoho). But Swahili is not the first language on people's minds when they think of an easy language. One

of the first to come to mind might be Spanish—however, I beg to differ. I haven't ever studied it, and I only occasionally read the Spanish version of instructions to see if I can pronounce the words correctly, but Spanish seems so hard to me...not because the language itself is hard, but because I don't really have an interest in learning it.

Those who ask me what the easiest language to learn is will usually hear me go on and on about Arabic. That's not because it's easy, that's because I love it. I will defend Greek and Arabic and Chinese (and Swahili, too, if anyone ever claims it's difficult) to the death, constantly encouraging people to not be scared by the foreign alphabets and grammar and to embrace the possibilities of learning a language so unlike English. Ultimately, what makes a language easy or hard is not the grammar—it's your willingness to learn.

The Ultimate Winter Break Bucket List

By Abigail Ojeda, Assistant to the Associate Editor

While there's no telling how much we would bribe other people to take our finals so winter break can start early, an entire month without school also means going several weeks without binging *The Office* with your best friends or making late-night Cookout runs. If you're not working or traveling a lot over the holiday, then it's important to stay busy until you return to the 919. Here is your ultimate winter break bucket list:

In the belated yet ever-present spirit of Halloween, make a haunted

gingerbread house (or just fail at making a gingerbread house and call it haunted to justify the appearance).

If you need a gift for the friend who has everything...there's one thing they don't have...a photo album of all the embarrassing photos you've taken of them.

Take the microwave turkey prank to the next level and ask a parent how to decorate an upside-down Christmas tree by taking a picture of your Christmas tree and rotating it.

Reenact your entire fall semester for your family using your elf on the shelf.

If anyone asks you deep questions that you don't want to answer, respond (in all seriousness) with a line from the movie *Elf*. If nothing else, find out their favorite color.

Take your Christmas caroling to the next level by singing songs entirely unrelated to Christmas. Start with Beyoncé.

If you live in the South and there is

no snow in the month of December, shake a snowglobe and it will immediately start snowing...in the snowglobe.

Drink water. While this is one of the most boring activities possible, it is a highly useful life skill.

If there is an obscenely hot day, make instant mashed potatoes and have a food fight with your siblings outside.

When your family asks about significant others, show them a photo of you and your favorite pet.

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