

# Profanity not f\*cking profane

Some readers may find the language used in this article offensive.

**Adam J. Manley**

The Clackamas Print

Fuck.

It's four letters, one syllable and a metric – excuse the term – fuckton of negative connotation.

When I was growing up I avoided the word, and all similarly vulgar words, because I thought that saying such things was a no-no in the eyes of God.

But as I grew old enough to question the all-knowing cultural mindset, I came to an astounding revelation:

Prohibited words and phrases – including “Jesus Christ,” “God damn it” and the “Fatal Felony” itself – are completely legitimate. There is nothing wrong with using them.

Some of them, such as exclaiming “Christ,” have evolved from things like “Christ preserve me!” Used by those who believe in Christ, it's not wrong. It's a prayer. And the “God” thing? Same deal, but more than that: God is not His name. It's a title, originally used in place of the name to avoid breaking the commandment that “Thou shalt not speak the Lord's name in vain.”

And then there's the bomb. The “F-word”: a word that can imply filth, fornication and even fun. Despite cultural desensitizing and increased use, it still draws offended gasps and can single-handedly increase the ratings of movies that otherwise

would never reach an R rating.

Often substituted by frick, freak, frag or fudge, it has lurked in society's shadows for centuries, its origin still debated. Its guttural sound, when properly used, emphasizes and draws attention to whatever is being said in a way that says “I'm tired of skirting around the issue.”

Moreover, it feels fucking fantastic to say. A real stress-reliever.

It's the top dog, the mother of all no-nos.

But why?

Religion can't be blamed for this one. I read through the Bible a number of times and never once found anything along the lines of “Thou shalt not droppeth the F-bomb.”

The problem lies in upbringing.

It's not wrong to tell children not to say that word – they shouldn't. Not until they're old enough to understand the meaning and how to best use the bristling power contained within this unique assemblage of letters.

But, for the love of God, they should be told that they just aren't old enough. It's an honest explanation used for so many other things children are prohibited from, and yet many parents seem to think that it's just not enough to deter their children in this instance.

So we're told, as we learn of the existence of the bomb and its compatriots, that these words are wrong. This isn't limited to religious families; many children are taught that the words are wrong even without the threat of otherworldly repercussions.

It's insane. To bar the use of words that feel so damned good to say is nothing short of madness.

Now, that isn't a carte blanche to use them anytime, anywhere. They're powerful words, to be sure, and overusing them diminishes their power. Unfortunately, the notion that the words are inherently wrong, simply by nature of their existence, encourages their flagrant misuse by wannabe rebels lacking in imagination.

What happens as a result is a society comprised mostly of two incredibly unbearable stereo-

types: those who are too easily offended by these “bad words” and those who overuse and pervert the words for no other reason than because they're told not to.

These words have been mis-

handled long enough. They're not wrong, and they're also not meant to be treated as casually as a handshake. Stop bitching about being offended. Stop going out of your way to offend.

Do it for the children.

## Molalla beatings: hate crimes hit close to home

**Katie Wilson**

Co-Editor-in-Chief

Make a fist.

It's not hard.

Make a fist and leave behind what everyone has said about the basic good of humanity because they were lying.

Last Thursday, in Molalla, a mob of 20 to 30 white males severely beat up two Hispanic men, Edwin Gonzales and Vivian Guzman.

Some newspapers have made a point of calling the mob a “group,” as if at any moment the men were about to join hands and sing “Kumbaya” instead of using those same hands to reach down and pick up stones the size of grapefruits to hurl at Gonzales and Guzman.

I was reading letters to the editor written to *The Oregonian* regarding the incident. The writers were trying to find a reason, something to blame, something to explain: the new immigration bill, ignorance, bad economy, fear, herd mentality.

I don't know what everyone is saying about why and how that mob of teenagers launched an unprovoked attack against two men, but we are fools if we are surprised by it.

After all – admit it – given the right circumstances, situation and state of mind, it's not difficult to hate anyone ... regardless of skin color.

The trouble is that the hate is hitting close to home and we shouldn't ignore it.

Molalla isn't too far away from most of us, and Clackamas Community College isn't exempt from prejudice and discrimination.

Different instances have occurred on the campus ... and not

just to Latinos, but to other students of color, and gay and lesbian students,” said Co-Counseling Chair Guadalupe Martinez.

“I do think, though, that the Latino population is a target because of all the immigration hype in the last five years that's really peaked in the last year,” she added. “Whenever you have economical, political and social instability, you're going to have a scapegoat. The Latino population is an easy target at the moment.”

Martinez teaches a leadership class for students who are in charge of mentoring a cohort of Latino high school students.

She says she hasn't talked to the Molalla students in the cohort about their feelings and reactions to what happened in their town, but she knows from personal experience how frightening and demeaning discrimination can be.

“In the last year, I have suffered, not just from prejudice, but also discriminatory actions,” she said. “It makes you feel really impotent. I'm a college instructor, a counselor ... I have a Master's Degree and I feel impotent. I can not imagine the powerlessness that it means for a younger person.”

For those people who choose to live in ignorance and like to think that just because we can get to destinations faster or play our music louder, human nature has changed or racism is a dead horse, Martinez has this comment:

“It's not something that's done and over with or that's only a part of [past] history. It's something we need to continue to be aware of, especially since it's not so distant geographically. This happened in Molalla. It's stuff that happens. It's not foreign or far away.”



Illustration by Kayla Berge and Dustin Ragsdale Clackamas Print

## MORE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Learning a second language not so easy; ESL students 'brave'

My ancestor, William Bradford, second governor of Plymouth Colony, would be impressed with how much this nation has grown since he and his fellow religious refugees came to America in 1620. In less than 400 years, we've grown from a small cluster of colonies at the mercy of nature and the “native people” to a superpower of over 301 million people. We have been able to do this because, despite our differences (of opinion, culture, language, religion, etc.), we have always found a way to work together to make a better life for ourselves and for the generations to come.

Today, the world sees the success of the United States and people from all over the world who come here to build better lives. They bring with them their distinctive cultures, religions and languages – as did the early colonists. Perhaps this, in part, has contributed to our success as a nation, in contrast with other

nations with more homogenous cultures. We don't expect people to leave behind their cultural distinctiveness and be “just like us.” We find ways to use that distinctiveness to make life for all Americans better and more enjoyable.

Nobody denies the fact that one of the most important elements of success for new immigrants is learning English. Our government recognizes this, and for that reason it funds ESL (English as a Second Language) programs all across the United States.

We are fortunate at Clackamas Community College to have one of the most successful ESL programs in the entire state of Oregon. In fact, many ESL students transfer from ESL programs at other community colleges, and even universities, because of our ESL department's well-deserved reputation. For that reason, on any given day, you can hear Chinese, French, Korean, Russian, German, Spanish,

Japanese and other languages spoken on campus.

Although these students do not share a common language, they share a common goal – making English their common language. If you have not become fluent in a second language, it is hard to understand just how difficult it is. The fact that our ESL students put forth so much effort to learn English should be something that gives all CCC students a sense of pride.

Unfortunately, there are some people who have a very difficult time accepting the fact that not everyone who lives here is fluent in English. As someone who has studied hard to become fluent in a second language, it frustrates me when I hear people say that immigrants should “speak English if they want to live here,” as if every immigrant should arrive in the US already fluent in English. I have never heard of any other country

requiring fluency in the local language as a condition to entry.

Our ESL students work hard to learn English. But learning English is not nearly as easy as many radio commentators say. (It is ironic that some of the most vocal of these freely admit that they only speak English, yet they speak as if they were experts on the subject of second language acquisition.)

Speaking from experience, learning a foreign language and speaking it daily can be physically exhausting. There are times when I find speaking English relaxing – because I don't have to think so hard. I'm sure that this is true for our foreign students as well.

Speaking with friends in their native language lets their minds rest – and we can all relate to the need for a mind-break from time to time. By the way, just to put your mind at ease, they aren't talking about you. (I eves drop all the time, and I have never heard a Spanish speaker talk-

ing about me behind my back.)

Consider also this: Not all ESL students stay in the United States. Many return to their home countries. But the time they spend here gives them first-hand experience as to what life in America is, and what Americans are. These non-immigrant ESL students become our ambassadors to the rest of the world: When they return home, they take part of their American experience home with them.

Change is not easy for anyone. Our world is changing, and our success as individuals and as nations depends on how we adapt and take advantage of that change. We have a special opportunity at CCC to get to know people from all over the world, and they have the opportunity to get to know us. Let us all use that opportunity to make our lives and those of future generations better, as our brave ancestors did for us.

– Jason Elliott