

PASSION FOR TEACHING

You broke my heart. You took what I loved away from me. I'm talking to you, UO. You have taken my work, my motivation, my passion and my dreams and thrown them away without care, without regret.

My work is teaching. My motivation is the improvement of my students' lives. My passion is seeing students understand something they didn't understand before, and feeling like a better person because of that. My dreams are to improve as a teacher for the rest of my life.

I know closely and have deep respect for some members of the administration. I don't know the rest of them, but I wonder about their experiences in academia recently. They are scholars at the pinnacle of the research in their field. They've spent decades developing their research, working tirelessly towards the pursuit of knowledge. They have been passionate

teachers in the past and fervently believed in what they've said in classrooms. They've had impassioned debates with their students and amongst their peers about what is right and just. They have thought fairly and deeply about their field of study. I respect them but, right now, I cannot be on their side.

I wonder when a member of the administration last had an undergraduate student in their office genuinely trying to understand a difficult concept from a class. I wonder when they last said something to an undergraduate about academics that transformed a student. I wonder about the last "ah-ha!" moment they witnessed: when it occurred, how it made them feel and whether they carry that feeling with them in their role as a university employee. I wonder when they last hugged an undergraduate who barely squeaked by, or one that excelled and became their protégé.

I love to get to know my students, understand their backgrounds and struggles, and be the best educator I can. I stand by my students as an ally in all aspects of their lives.

I routinely have students tell me that I'm the only teacher at UO who ever bothered to learn their name. This is a damn shame, and I'm angry about it. But right now, you're trying to take even that small sliver of personhood away from our undergraduates.

This is why I strike now. Originally, it was for women in STEM fields and the right of graduate students to earn a living wage. But now it's about the undergraduates and the future of this institution. We are the flagship public university of this state, and we owe it to Oregon to educate the future generation, to teach content, to evaluate understanding of content fairly and to treat students as human beings.

The UO is failing in all of these aspects, and I am ashamed. I am willing to reach a compromise, but I am not willing to sacrifice my students' educations for it. They're far too valuable.

Leanne Merrill

GTF, Department of Mathematics

COLTRANE'S CONCEIT

When I deployed to Afghanistan, I quickly learned that Afghans would judge us on our deeds, not our words. I came to accept that was as it should be. In contrast, many of my friends felt that the Afghans should support us because of our promises, or simply because we were Americans and by definition "the good guys."

UO President Coltrane has the same conceit — that good intentions are sufficient. I don't doubt that he believes in paid family and medical leave. He believes that the university would administer his proposed

NOTES FROM THE RIVERSIDE BY MARK HARRIS

Open Season

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT WITHOUT A TRIAL

I've had this sense of it, open season, aka socially sanctioned targeting, since age 7, reinforced at 19, and lulled into a Eugene false sense of security pushing 60. I admit to a certain numbing grief over my lifetime composed of anger, rage, sadness, depression, loss and, finally, resolution. Being black bears the responsibility of acting as though you have some wisdom (at least sense, good freedom-fighter home training) and are working for the liberation of human beings everywhere. Illuminating and undoing the matrices supporting extrajudicial killings interests me more than protesting.

Certain social structures and the forces that run through them make police act less like treasured, inclusive community members and more like an occupying enemy force. I like to think of this as a public health problem where virulent memes cause certain people to fear and/or hate others or, in effect, allow harm to come to some and not others.

My resolution comes from the public health strategy of strengthening the host (target), since police can take the position of agent in targeting some or not taking action against others. Taking the notion of open season, if you know you're being, in effect, targeted-hunted because of your social identity (whether scary-

hated "uppity" black male, or scary-hated "uppity" Being In Total Control of Herself-empowered woman), then you act in such a way to minimize the danger society seems unwilling to effectively protect you from.

I remember Leonard Deadwyler in 1966, Eula Mae Love in 1979, Lloyd Stevenson in Portland in 1985, Rodney King in 1991, Trayvon Martin in 2012, Michael Brown in 2014, Tamir Rice in 2014, Eric Garner in 2014 and whoever else is extrajudicially killed in the next and every 28 hours.

By saying something is happening at a more or less predictable rate is to say there is a structure supporting it, either by written or unwritten policy, if not law. It's not illegal to apply carotid holds, just against police policy. So the decision to use them is a decision to use deadly force, and not be prosecuted for it if you are a police officer. Like what I call the "Nicole number": 850-plus women killed in L.A. County by their domestic partners, once every nine days. The Lane County figure once cited was every three weeks.

This results from how society and police deal with repeated domestic violence. Regardless of the intent of those who cause the excess mortalities, the effect is that people are dying preventable premature deaths.

We've known for 30 years that carotid holds used on black men are a potential death sentence. Apprehending a shoplifting suspect (Stevenson: "Don't choke 'em, smoke 'em") or selling cigarettes (Garner: "I can't breathe") are not capital offenses, police shouldn't apply lethal force. But they do, and whether scared or don't care, it's still, in effect and regardless of intent, a form of racism, and racism is neither seen as a mental illness nor a crime.

Extrajudicial killing by law enforcement is capital punishment without benefit of a trial: a kinder, gentler contemporary form of lynching. Historically when law enforcement actively practiced lynching, it enjoyed the sanction or inaction of society at the time. The protests of injustice are understandable, but civil rights struggle requires you strengthen potential targets with disciplined strategic behavior.

What happened to Michael Brown was another tragic, preventable, cautionary tale. As a black man growing up with LAPD, which gave us SWAT, DARE, a tentacle of COINTELPRO, in no world that I live in would I jack cigars from a store, then walk down the middle of a major street in broad daylight in the black community, tell off the white cop correcting that behavior, mess with his gun and have a reasonable expectation to live through that. Seems like a suicide by cop scenario to me, which means, you're young and stupid, high, mentally ill or in denial of what it means to bear the responsibility, not the burden, of being black male in America when it's open season.

Mark Harris is an instructor and substance abuse prevention coordinator at LCC.



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