

RAPE CULTURE

It isn't a surprise that the two men accused of sexually assaulting a woman at the Hi-fi Music Hall were not prosecuted, as only 11 out of 1,000 perpetrators are brought to trial on those charges, according to RAINN.

Prosecutors commonly insist that they can't bring rape cases to trial because they can't prove "beyond a reasonable doubt." But, as Leigh Gilmore extensively documents in her book *Tainted Witness: Why We Doubt What Women Say About Their Lives*, women's testimony is doubted and disbelieved regardless of evidence.

To quote Gilmore: "The discourses about rape that circulate within rape culture undermine women's testimony. Rape discourse casts doubt on women as credible witnesses to their own harm, and on claims of rape in general. Through rape discourse, women who bring forward accounts of sexual violence are turned into tainted witnesses before the law and in courts of public opinion."

Gilmore explains how the pernicious

influence of the "he said/she said" dynamic combines with the feeble excuse "no one knows what really happened" to immediately cast doubt on women and their testimony. These weak justifications for disbelieving women need be erased from the discussion if society is ever going to put an end to rape.

If prosecutors won't go after rapists as hard as they go after others, we will need to hold them — and the rapists they excuse — accountable.

Ryan Foote
Eugene

LOVES THE COVENANT

Unlike the author of the previous review ("In Space, No One Can Hear You Yawn," *EW*, May 25), *Alien: Covenant* is my second-favorite *Alien* film. The title itself, reflecting on the agreement between God and Noah after the flood (the character David does deliver a torrent of sorts back to the Engineers).

I loved the recurring theme of the symphony, starting with the prologue after Da-

vid gets a taste of sitting on the "throne," to where Walter mentions how one sour note can derail the entire symphony, and in the end when you hear the full composition of what David first played to bring it all full circle.

I also loved the inclusion of the religious captain that everyone brushed past, but towards the end the protagonist needs his faith if they are to survive the horror.

The *Weekly* reviewer chose to sit through an entire movie specifically looking for things to go against his liberal sensibilities to get triggered by. I wish people could just sit through a movie with an open mind and enjoy the ride. Especially a movie so rich in undertone and symbolism that's both well crafted and acted.

Scott Stewart
Eugene

ARE THEY ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS?

The writer who wrote the *Alien: Covenant* review is an idiot with delusions that his opinions matter. I guess if a mov-

ie doesn't blatantly explain the plot and makes you think a little, it must be bad.

Perhaps author Rick Levin is in the wrong job because his reviews are not only inaccurate but borderline misogynistic; see line stating, "Katherine Waterson in the Butch Ripley role, right down to nipples poking through her tank top."

Perhaps he should apply at the local 7/11.

William Hermann
Eugene

SAVE THE HULT CURTAIN

Another mistake, replacing the main curtain at the Hult Center.

This is not a curtain; this is a piece of art. It was selected in a national juried art competition and funded with one-percent for art funds.

This work, along with the other destroyed or misplaced forms of art, is a community resource. It is community property and must be maintained and cared for.

Art all over the world is restored, not destroyed.

Our current short list of not caring:

DEMOCRACY & EDUCATION

BY LARRY LEWIN, RACHEL RICH AND ROSCOE CARON

A Stick into the Spokes

OPTING OUT OF TESTING

Testing season is upon us — again. During April, May and June, students take weeks of Smarter Balanced Math and Language Arts tests. This is in addition to a year's worth of other tests such as OAKS Science, EasyCBM, DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), STAMP (STAndards-based Measurement of Proficiency), EDL2 (Evaluación del desarrollo de la lectura), etc.

Yet some choose not to. Their families sign the Oregon Department of Education's Opt Out form because House Bill 2655 allows every parent to make this choice for their kids for any reason. Forms are available online or in all school offices.

Two years ago, 10 percent of Eugene School District 4J students opted out; last year that number increased to 13 percent. (The numbers for this year are not yet tabulated.) Lake Oswego's opt-out rate was an astronomical 71 percent — with no repercussions!

The Springfield School Board last June unanimously passed a resolution urging parents to opt their kids out, calling the tests an "ineffective measure of student growth and accountability."

Then-Board Chairman Jonathan Light said the Smarter Balanced test was never created for students' benefit.

"It was designed to compare districts and teachers, not to help students learn," he said. "As a board member, I just don't feel like it's OK to encourage our students to participate in something that doesn't help them in any way. I really feel like school boards have to stand up for what's right for their students."

Amen to that.

WHAT OPTING OUT ACCOMPLISHES

When parents say no to these tests, they are jamming a stick into the spokes of a system that unfairly punishes many kids who don't test well for a variety of reasons, including various disabilities or English language learning.

Nationwide, teachers say the technology demands of tests, the wording of questions and even the tasks themselves are not age appropriate. Yet students who fail can be placed in remedial classes, too often at the expense of missing out on interesting and enriching electives.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Under No Child Left Behind, corporate reformers and their political allies believed they knew more about what's best for kids than teachers, administrators, local school district leaders and even parents. Under their corporate model, they determined that public schools (not the schools their *own* kids attend) should be run like businesses: data-driven, top-down and one-size-fits-all.

Corporate opportunists then turned classroom activities into profits. Work normally performed as part of a teacher's salary is gradually being replaced with computerized lessons and ever more standardized tests at enormous costs. This model has set the stage for U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos and her corporation-friendly devaluation of public education.

THE RESULT?

Before No Child Left Behind, kids normally took only three or four standardized tests from kindergarten through graduation. Now students in 4J and other districts take up to 120 standardized tests in addition to

classroom tests and quizzes! And strangely, the Oregon Department of Education is considering adding even more standardized tests.

Since Oregon launched the state's Smarter Balanced tests three years ago, our overall standardized test spending has exploded to over \$80 million annually. (Figure based on research through Oregon Rep. Susan McLain, a state contract and a grant application we'll post online.) Yet training to improve teaching dropped by millions! Electives like music, art, shop and PE all but disappeared. And key student services ranging from nurses to counselors rose a mere \$125,000 annually — only 25 cents per student per year! We must restore a balance.

Schools are not factories. Kids are not products. Learning is not output production. Teachers are not input and output managers. Educational leaders should not be production supervisors and enforcers.

Make your voice heard and put a stick into the spokes. Contact your kids' teachers, their principal and your school board members to demand we rebalance our spending, reduce standardized testing and restore electives and student services. The timing is perfect; the state budget and test contracts are under negotiation.

Opt out now!

Larry Lewin, Rachel Rich and Roscoe Caron are former middle and high school teachers in Eugene and Springfield Districts. All are members of CAPE, the Community Alliance for Public Education, a coalition of parents, teachers, professors, students and community members who challenge the many assaults on public education and who believe that strong public education is the foundation for American democracy. We meet the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Mondays at 4:30 pm at Perugino in downtown Eugene. For more information, visit CAPE's website at oregoncape.org.