Hilltopics

HAUNTED ON THE HILLTOP

An Interview with a Student Senator

The Exploitation of the Congo and its People

Family Weekend and Halloween Plans

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Letter from the Editor

Shame on You, Shame on Us

I have to admit that I was surprised when I first heard the news. Even on this campus, which is so resistant to progressive ideologies and so closeted about its many problems, social and otherwise, issues of cultural appropriation and marginalization have received increased attention in recent months and years. We had a screening of *Dear White People*. Minority voices are becoming more powerful every day. Increasing diversity is (at least supposedly) a top priority of the administration, and the campus is in fact becoming more diverse, although not quickly enough. And beyond SMU, race relations have been in the national news spotlight for many months. Overall, people are becoming more aware of the racial implications of their actions and of the cultural contexts within which they live their lives.

Or at least they should be—and they have absolutely no excuse if they are not. Which is why everything about the recent "Ice Age" party, which as of this writing has been cancelled, is profoundly disturbing and disheartening on a campus which desperately needs change and has been working earnestly toward that change for a long time.

It is difficult to know why the brothers of AEPi and PIKE thought this event was a good idea; a party which exhorts its attendees to "bring out your bling, jerseys, and inner thug" is a textbook example of just the sort of thing which civilized society has finally recognized as offensive and certainly not in accordance with a university's values, much less simple human decency. But whatever their thought process, it happened, and it will be impossible for them to deny that what they did was wrong. What is less clear is whether or not they will apologize, and if they will (or can) be punished, and if their larger and long-term image will suffer, as it should, because of all this, and most of all, if they will enact positive changes within their cultures and practices.

Also of note is the self-proclaimed "righteous mutual goal" of the "fine gentlemen" of the two fraternities in question: "to throw the most savage banger in SMU history." What does this sort of language say about our campus culture here at SMU? About what an astoundingly significant proportion of the student body values? At this place called the "Ivy of the South," where so many people are working to ensure that this university one day deserves that name, how does a culture still persist which deifies parties at the demonstrable and devastating expense of academics?

So it is that two major issues emerge, both related to a fundamental malaise in the overall culture on this campus that we have not yet been able to fix. Or, perhaps, we haven't tried hard enough—and in that case the blame is on each and every person who has ever called SMU home. I cannot, and should not, attempt to address the causes and complexities of this sickness here. But I can promise that *Hilltopics* will do exactly that over the coming weeks, months, and years; we remain committed to providing a forum for discussions just like the one that is happening already and must continue to happen. As of this writing, the *SMU Campus Weekly* has not even acknowledged the incident—yet another example of the repression and complacency present here at SMU. For our part, we are not content with simply letting this moment pass.

So, to those of you who care about this problem and have something to say, come and write for us. To those of you we can help by providing a voice, let us know. To those of you who care about our university and the well being of its people, keep reading and talking and thinking about these issues. Big gears are already turning on campus in response to this event, but it is the duty of all of us to ensure that they don't lose momentum. Keep up the energy, and keep up the struggle.

-Kenny Martin

Happening in the UHP

by Camille Aucoin, UHP Office Coordinator

As we move into the downhill slope of this semester, I'd like to highlight some upcoming UHP events and opportunities to keep on your calendar:

UHP Logo and T-Shirt Design Competition
Have an idea for a new UHP logo? Or a great UHP t-shirt design? Help us promote the UHP! Email your ideas to Susan Harris (sharris@smu.edu) by November 10th for your chance to win a $50 Barnes & Noble gift card! If you would like to use the current UHP logo in a design, email Camille Aucoin (caucoin@smu.edu) for a copy of the file.

UHP Study Break & Book Giveaway | 17 November 2015, 4:30 PM, Scholars' Den
Take a break from studying for the last of midterms or the start of finals and join UHP for some hot chocolate, snacks, and free books! This semester, we will be giving away copies of Go Set a Watchman by Harper Lee (Love it? Hate it? Come discuss your opinions in the Spring!) and The True American: Murder and Mercy in Texas by Anand Giridharadas. Winners of The True American will have the chance to have dinner with Rais Bhuiyan, the subject of the book.

Mad Hatter's Tea Party
Our first Mad Hatter's Tea Party, A Medieval Halloween, was a smashing success! We can't wait to host more lively discussions with some of SMU's most interesting and entertaining professors. Our second meeting will take place in November. Keep an eye out for the event, and don't forget to bring your mug and your hat!

In addition to these events, have you heard about the two travel courses being offered by the UHP this spring?

ASAG 3350.001H New York Colloquium
Phillip Van Keuren
J-Term: Sunday, January 3, 2016 (arrival) through Sunday, January 17, 2016 (departure)
This course involves intensive analysis, discussion, and writing concerning works of art in museum collections and exhibitions, and in alternative exhibition spaces. Students will study the philosophical as well as the practical to define and understand the nature of the art that society produces and values. The colloquium meets in New York City for 2 weeks in Januar

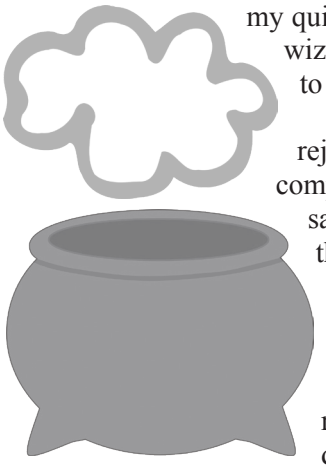
HIST/HRTS 3317.001H Persecution to Affirmation: Sexual Minorities and Human Rights
David Doyle & Maxime Foerster
TuTh 2:00 – 3:20 PM, Shuttles Hall 315
Travel to Amsterdam, Netherlands over Spring Break (March 6th – 13th)!
15 honor students will travel and conduct research as Richter Fellows in Amsterdam, Netherlands over the spring break. The focus of this class will be issues of gender and sexuality across time and place. Over the spring break the class will remain for the most part in Amsterdam—studying and touring the city, past and present controversies and issues surrounding gender and sexuality, and meeting with people from other parts of the globe who have arrived in Amsterdam as refugees.
The progression of course will begin with readings on the modern human rights movement and its basic components. We will then move to a series of comparative readings that examine how sexuality and sexual orientation and gender "slippage" have been understood in different parts of the world over time and continue to be today. These 'case studies', while necessarily limited in scope, will begin to illustrate for the student just how differently those with same sex attractions or gender bending have been understood—and treated—across time and place. In an effort to illustrate people's real agency in the face of adversity, cruelty, and discrimination the readings will not focus entirely on oppression, but will also detail how the human spirit manages to innovate and adapt.

As a student who has participated in an Honors travel course, I cannot recommend them enough. These travel courses are fantastic opportunities to have a truly unique UHP (and college) experience.
If you are interested in either course, email Dr. Doyle as soon as possible! These courses will be filled soon!
Keep an eye out for more upcoming UHP events and opportunities in the future!

Scribblings of a Magical Mustang Misfit

by Jacquie Elias

Unfortunately, now that I have substantially surpassed my 11th birthday, I think it may be wise, and perhaps depressing, to admit that I never did receive my owl and invitation to Hogwarts. I did, however, receive a fancy admission letter from SMU and a hefty tuition bill, so I guess you could say I am doing all right in life. Well, at least, that's what muggles like yourself would assume.



Living the witch life at SMU, however, is anything but a charm. As I sit here compiling my musings with my quill, I cannot help but cringe at the limits of the non-magic world. In my world of witchcraft and wizardry, word limits and deadlines are a fix with a flick of my wand, yet here I am confining myself to the expectations of non-magic folk.

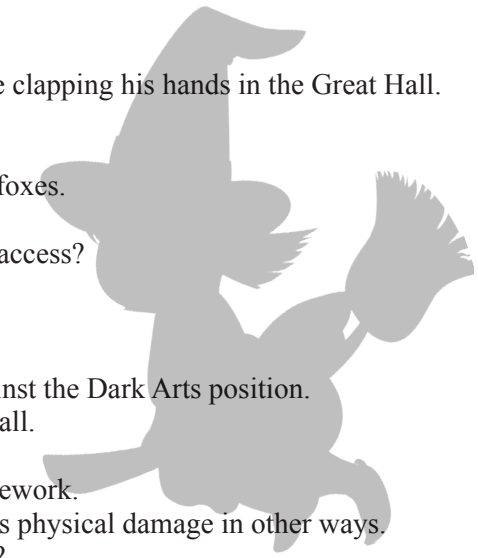
Nonetheless, life at this beautiful campus does remind me of my meant-to-be-yet-slightly-rejected-from alma mater. With the introduction of the Commons system, one cannot help but compare the two schools. While I never formally wore the traditional sorting hat, word on the street says RLSH has developed one of their own that assigns residents to their Commons. RLSH then continues in the footsteps of Hogwarts with its introduction of the Commons Cup. I mean, granted, the SMU Commons Cup has not been underway for centuries, so it has yet to fully develop; however, the idea is much the same.

In addition to the new Commons system, the physical SMU campus reminds me of the grand school of magic. Entering Fondren, I cannot help but gravitate toward the tempting restricted sections—or in our case the blocked-off construction sites. Walking a little further down the boulevard you cannot help but notice the Shrieking Shack of SMU, more commonly referred to as the Health Center. While SMU's version of the Womping Willow is not near the Health Center, I have definitely seen more damage to cars on campus from the unfortunately placed yellow pole in Mustang Parking Garage than Hogwarts has seen from its historic tree. Even driving to campus, searching for SMU Blvd. in between University and Mockingbird is basically as complicated as finding Platform 9 ¾.

I have even started a little investigating inside of the buildings. I will surely keep you posted, but I am 90 percent sure the entrance to the Chamber of Secrets is somewhere in Dallas Hall. Speaking of Dallas Hall, have you seen the basement? The basement is basically a direct replica of Gryffindor's lobby, and one doesn't even need a password to enter. In addition to these buildings, I'm pretty sure cupola is just a fancy word for the dungeons or, perhaps, the Owlery.

Despite these striking similarities, one difference, without a doubt, snaps me out of my Hogwarts fantasies. Hogwarts would never pass SMU fire code. I'm pretty sure the amount of violations in the Great Hall would pay for my tuition.

All in all, SMU is another stepping-stone for my future education. I'm not talking about graduate school though. Let's be real: age is but a number, so I'm still waiting for that letter.



Finally, you may be a wizard if you personally relate to any of the following:

- The cookie bell in Umphrey Lee is basically the equivalent of Dumbledore clapping his hands in the Great Hall.
- Why is there a never-ending amount of staircases that in fact don't move?
- I may not get attacked by trolls, but Giddy Up is another concern entirely.
- We may not have any three-headed dogs, but we do have two one-headed foxes.
- Who needs the Marauder's map when you have YikYak?
- Who needs an invisibility cloak to sneak places when you have RA swipe access?
- Why doesn't Synder Plaza have a candy shop like Hogsmeade?
- So, we have a quidditch team.
- Who needs to apparate or fly when you have a hoverboard?
- The SMU football coaching staff is basically as vacant as the Defense against the Dark Arts position.
- Imagine how Fleur did in the TwiWizard cup…that's basically SMU football.
- Why have only Filch's cat on campus when you can have 57 feral cats?
- Harry's study habits are basically my life: save the world and then do homework.
- My biology book may not bite, but I'm pretty sure it could do some serious physical damage in other ways.
- Why ride Buckbeak when you can ride the three ponies outside of Moody?
- Coffee and polyjuice potion are the same—both make me a completely different person.
- Dear food delivery person, SMU isn't platform 9 ¾. It's just not that hard to find my dorm.
- I may not be able to talk to snakes, but I can talk to squirrels.
- Why use a time turner when you have Jan Term?
- I may or may not have destroyed a few ceiling tiles with a miscalculated expelliarmus charm.

An Interview with Student Senate Member Spencer Reppond

by Daniel Muehring

This transcript has been edited for clarity. D=Daniel Muehring……S=Spencer Reppond
Spencer Reppond is the current Membership Committee Chair for Student Senate. He is a sophomore Film Studies and Finance Major.
Daniel Muehring, the VS Honors Mentor, is a sophomore Management Science and Economics major.

Photo courtesy of Spencer Reppond

D: What is your role in Student Senate?

S: I function to keep Student Senate full. Day to day what that means is that as senators graduate or leave I make sure vacancies get filled in time. We hold interviews in our committee to try to find the best applicants. We're also in charge of finding general members for the Senate committees at the beginning of each year, as well as recruiting First Year Senators and making sure they understand how to run for positions. Next semester I'll be conducting the general elections.

D: Do you have a committee?

S: Yes, but my committee differs from others in that other committees are comprised of both senators and general members. Membership Committee is only comprised of senators to prevent a conflict of interest during elections if general members wanted to run for senate positions. They would be making the rules for elections and that would be unfair.

D: How does only having Senators on your Committee affect your meetings?
S: It's a much smaller committee of only 3 senators. It's nice to have a smaller group since we can bounce ideas off each other more quickly. General members would be so swamped with the Election Code that they wouldn't really have the time to catch up or have good input. Having it be just senators allows everyone to have valuable input into the decisions we're trying to make.

D: In the last general election there were concerns about people of multi-ethnic backgrounds who were not able to vote for both of their ethnic identities. For example, biracial Asian-Caucasians were not able to vote for their Asian Senator. What are you doing to address that?

S: The system's not perfect. The technical side of how you vote is through how you're classified as a student through the university. It has come up a lot. We're talking about it right now, but there's not an immediate solution. We hope to have it resolved by next election, but I don't want to give any definitive answer right now because there are a lot of solutions. Each student may have the chance to register independent of the university system for what they want to vote for eventually.

D: Were you present for the vote on the LGBT Student Senate seat a few years ago?***
S: I was not present but I do have an opinion on it.

D: As membership chair, I know people might say they have personal beliefs one way or another. I'd like to ask you strictly as membership chair what do you think about the LGBT seat?

S: Each senator represents about 300 constituents. But when you start working with special interest groups you start to run into this double dipping factor where hypothetically say I'm African American. I have a senator that represents me for being African American, and for whatever school I'm in. So some people take issue that some people are being overly represented. And for the LGBTQ community, there would also be the issue of asking everyone to organize themselves…And so that's difficult. How would you go about doing that? Do you register yourself with the university that you're gay? That seems weird. I don't know. I don't have a specific stance on it one way or another.
What it boils down to is, do those students not have a voice? Because honestly every student does. And in adding that extra seat there's no extra value. And that's just being frank, but if I'm gay and I think I'm being discriminated against for X, Y, and Z, I know every senator in Student Senate wants to help me. Every senator would rally around that student to make him feel like he's not being marginalized. I would vote against it as there's no added value, and the fact that making students register their sexual preference seems odd.

D: Where would you like to see Senate next year?
S: I'd like every student to know that they have someone representing them. If you're like "F***, I hate this fence" I'd like there to be increased transparency there. People should know they have a voice. I feel that a lot of kids are intimidated by it [Student Senate], but I feel like it's more of a transparency issue that we're trying to fix. We're here to fix things, and trying to make SMU the best place it can be.

**** In the Spring of 2014, the Student Senate voted to add a LGBT special interest Senate seat. This was sent to the student body for referendum but failed to receive the 2/3 majority it needed to pass on the first try (It received 59%). It was sent for a revote shortly after, and again failed to pass (52%). The effort to introduce this seat has not been repeated since.*

The Parents are Coming-Beware!

by Destiny Rose Murphy

This year SMU has elected to make Family Weekend, a time for awkward campus tours and pretending to be a responsible adult in front of your relatives, take place over Halloween weekend. Now, to a casual observer this might seem like a good idea—theoretically, flooding the campus with judging parents would cut down on the heavy partying that is so common during this time of the year, right? Surely the responsible young men and women of our wonderful school will go to calm little dinners with their families instead of putting on the skimpy costumes traditionally worn for college Halloween parties? Unfortunately, most likely not.

You see, at universities, Halloween is a time-honored custom that cannot be stopped by so small a thing as the disapproval of parents. There is no other time of the year when a student can show up at the party with almost no clothes on, claim to be a nudist, and completely get away with it. To quote the *Hamlet* of our generation, the film "Mean Girls," "Halloween is the one night a year when a girl can dress like a total slut and no one can say anything about it." Girls and boys alike know this, so Halloween parties have some of the highest turnouts of extra-curricular festivities.

So what are the enterprising students of SMU going to do since parents and grandparents are monopolizing their time on Halloween day? The partying is starting earlier and going longer of course! That's right, the administration tried to cut down on partying and managed to increase it exponentially. Parties are starting as early as a week and a half before the spooky day itself and increasing in frequency as All Hallows Eve approaches.

Now you may be thinking to yourself as you read this article, "Gee Willikers Batman, I don't have a costume and this article says I don't have much time to get one!" But fear not loyal readers—I wouldn't dare leave you without a solution for your current predicament. I am thus proud to present to you a short list of likely costume ideas for you to choose from for your last minute dress up needs:

Traditional Trashy Bunny: A classic for girls that was immortalized by the aforementioned pop culture classic "Mean Girls," this costume is easy to create and sure to be a hit. Just put on lingerie, a bunny tail, and bunny ears, and you're done. (Bunny accessories may be substituted for any cute and soft mammal i.e. kittens, puppies, etc. Amphibious and reptilian accessories not recommended.)

Game of Thrones: This novel series turned HBO hit has captured nation wide attention due to its graphic content and variety of interesting characters. Honestly there are so many characters in the thing that you could probably get away with wearing just about anything. Walk on your knees and tell people that you are the sassy dwarf. Wear a tight red dress and make weird comments about your siblings to go for the Cersei look. Do whatever you want, just don't spend the entire night talking about how much better the books were.

Minions: For some reason these little yellow buggers just refuse to die out. Why are they so popular? I have no idea, but they are, and everyone knows that to be cool in college you have to blindly follow the crowd, so paint yourself yellow and wear some denim overalls and goggles for the Minion look. Remember to talk in a made up language the whole night and attach yourself to anyone dressed as an evil character for authenticity.

That's all for this year's Halloween suggestions. Remember to be safe this year, and come up with a cover story for why your dorm is so trashed when the parents come to visit!

Aunt Dan and Lemon Surprises, Distrubs

by Kenny Martin

Photo Credit https://blog.smu.edu/meadows/

This past weekend, Meadows Theatre put on a production of Wallace Shawn's 1985 play *Aunt Dan and Lemon*, in which the titular Lemon, a disturbed woman who lives alone in her flat in London, relays a series of strange anecdotes about her parents, their friends, and most of all, her Aunt Dan. The play was disturbing—any audience members who showed up merely desiring a fun or relaxing time at the theatre were likely a bit shocked. But they were surely not disappointed, as the play offered plenty in the way of entertainment while remaining challenging and philosophically probing, and ultimately it demanded that the audience continue to consider what it had to say long after the final blackout, which is in my opinion a true mark of success.

In this production, the Margo Jones Theatre was transformed into Lemon's flat, complete with what must have been several thousand books lining the "walls" which enclosed the stage area—it was quite the impressive and striking display. All around the box were chairs and rows of pillows, where the audience sat. The result of the décor and the nature of the seating was a remarkably intimate stage; it allowed for closeness but maintained, for the most part, a degree of dramatic separation between actors and audience. It also drew conspicuous attention to issues of perspective and point of view; there wasn't a bad seat in the house (except, presumably, the pillows), but each seat had a sometimes wildly different view of the same scene, which was intriguing and made even small moments more dynamic and acutely fascinating.

The play takes place entirely in Lemon's flat in London in 1985 (the year of the premiere), though much of the work consists of stories told by Lemon about others which are acted out on the stage. In this way, the stage became pliable, a space where we were able to watch Lemon reliving the events which shaped her into the questionable person she became, even as we watched those events unfold for ourselves. For their part, the anecdotes comment on recent history to a large extent: Aunt Dan's astonishing success as an American, female Oxford don, her fanatical support and love of Henry Kissinger, the career struggles of Lemon's middle-class father, Aunt Dan's hippie friends. These stories are framed, importantly, by Lemon's discussion of the Nazis and their killing of the Jews in the Holocaust. She opens the play by discussing how she's been reading books about the death camps, and this first monologue seems innocent enough, at least in the moment. But her second monologue, which closes the play, dwells on the fact that the Nazis were "just trying to create a way of life"—almost offered as a justification for their actions—and sees Lemon admit, in the same breath, that she doesn't know if she's ever really cared about another person. So she goes on, even, to compare, or at least imply a comparison, between killing cockroaches and killing Jews—and all the while the audience is, for the most part, nodding along with her, or at least not consciously questioning her.

Herein lies the greatness of this play: Lemon and Aunt Dan (in many ways Lemon's ideological mentor/inspiration) aren't presented as conspicuously crazy, nor are their ideologies. In fact, they are treated and portrayed in such a way that many in the audience probably related to them on some rather intimate level. Thus, it comes as a disturbing shock to realize that the apparent logic, morality, trustworthiness, and responsibility of the two isn't as legitimate as we once thought, and it forces us to examine ourselves with much more honesty, criticism, and truth than we otherwise might have. And what we find, sometimes, may perhaps disturb us even more than the things said and done by Aunt Dan and Lemon themselves.

The production itself was executed very admirably. Dagny Sanson seemed perfectly fit for Lemon, with an unassuming presence but a potent and lurking intensity which she sustained throughout her performance. Leslie Ballart did a nice job of not revealing too much about Aunt Dan, which was at times frustrating but overall enhanced the effectiveness of the character. Dylan Guerra played a darkly comic and entertaining Raimondo, while Becca Rothstein provided a nicely subdued, kind, yet intense presence as Lemon's mother, who was a refreshing foil to the rough-and-tumble, ultimately malignant sensibility of Aunt Dan. The lighting design was vibrant and intriguing, all the way to the final progressive fade, and the sound was subtle but did a lot of work for the show.

Meadows Theatre's next production will be A Flea in Her Ear by Georges Feydeau, running from December 2-6. It is sure to continue what has been a strong Fall season.

Dear SMU,

They told me that going to a college forty-five minutes away from my hometown would be silly. They told me that in order to get a good education and to become a true individual, I needed to go to the East or West Coast. They told me that the right way to approach college decisions was to consider the schools they deemed worthy, and unfortunately I believed them for far too long. You proved me wrong, SMU.

SMU was on my list, but it wasn't at the top of my list. At the last minute, I decided to go on a tour. I was taken with how beautiful the buildings and greenery were on campus, and the opportunities for me to get involved seemed endless. Though I had my heart set on places far away, soon my biggest desire was to call a place close to home my new home.

When I got here, I found that the people were friendly, professors were engaging and passionate about their subjects, and even though I may get the occasional surprise shower from a Dallas Hall lawn sprinkler, it's a small price to pay for how beautiful the campus always looks. It's just an added bonus that on Saturdays there is delicious free food on The Boulevard and afterwards I get to see Peruna prancing down the football field as cute (I mean, manly) as ever.

I am able to discover new experiences and opportunities almost daily, and I have already learned so much about myself in just a few short months. So, SMU, you have absolutely lived up to my expectations. I can't wait to spend the next four years calling this place my home, and the rest of my life ponying up.

Best,

Kaleigh Cobb,
First-Year Student

CFCI strives to create peace in Congo

by Kayla Finstein

It might sound far-fetched, but every one of us holds in our possession a direct link to the Democratic Republic of the Congo: a land half the size of the U.S., rich with minerals like gold, tantalum, tungsten, and tin, yet also rich with economic inequality, poverty, and corruption. Congo might seem far away, but it's right here, in our hands. Our cell phones—those devices we hold so dear—carry pieces of Congo within them, through the minerals with which they are manufactured. Every text, every notification, every snap, and every tweet should be a reminder of where our products come from and how they're made.

Photo Credit CFCI

The significance of Congolese mineral usage in our electronics is huge. The mineral harvesting trade is controlled by armed paramilitary groups, who collect hundreds of millions of dollars every year from the sale of raw minerals to smelters. Those smelters sell to factories, who produce devices for the likes of Apple, HP, Canon, Nintendo, Nikon, Dell, and many others. These armed groups commit violent atrocities, including using rape as a tool of war and exploitation. Civil war in Congo in the early 2000s brutalized millions, and the violence hasn't ended. Conflict mineral harvesting is a critical element of a much larger, politically complex issue in the greater Congo region. And its impact is massive because of the great global demand for electronics.

This is also a major human rights issue that should be receiving international attention. With every single one of us affected, how could it not be critical? At this point, you might be asking what you could do to change this scenario. Boycotting all electronics is unlikely and extreme, and few of us have the ability (or, perhaps, the desire) to do work on the ground in Congo. So what CAN we do? The Conflict-Free Campus Initiative is here to help. A branch of the Enough Project (a group that works to end global genocide) and Raise Hope for Congo, CFCI does grassroots work on college campuses, working to build a student/faculty coalition in support of conflict-free mineral harvesting and electronics production. The biggest part of our work is lobbying university administrations to purchase electronics from and ethically invest in companies that have audited their supply chains, made public statements in support of conflict-free electronics, and are working toward producing conflict-free products. Young college students have serious buying power, something corporate America is well aware of. In conjunction with this movement, CFCI at SMU is working to create a campus presence and raise awareness of an issue that affects all of us.

In 2010, Congress passed the Dodd-Frank Reform after years of lobbying by the Enough Project and their private sector allies. Section 1502 of this legislation requires all publicly traded companies to file and report their conflict mineral status to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) annually. Though many companies have begun the legal processes to report yearly, others are at a loss as to how to comply, especially if they have not been doing supply chain audits or are lacking materials documentation. Clearly, this issue goes beyond Congo—the legal and political ramifications of conflict mineral harvesting affect the way that Americans (and the rest of the world) do business.

Yet, at the heart of this issue are the daily lives of Congolese citizens. Creating peace in Congo will be a complicated, tedious, and painstaking process. Yet, reducing the power of paramilitary groups, and their control over mines and quarries, is a big step toward the creation of conflict-free mineral harvesting. Further implementing audits on the ground in Congo, and ensuring that local governance isn't lost to corruption, could mean that conflict-free electronics production can become the industry norm and not the exception. Corporate ethics, transparency, and justice should be the gold standard, not just for producing iPhones and laptops, but for all global business.

If you're interested in becoming involved with CFCI's grassroots organizing here at SMU, check out our Facebook page (fb.com/cfcismu) or shoot me an email at kayla.finstein@enoughproject.org. Congo deserves better than injustice, and consumers deserve to know the human cost of our electronics purchasing. Together, we can stand in solidarity with the Congolese people in the fight to end conflict mineral harvesting.

Miles

by Madeleine Case

77,433: I start the car after closing the trunk and climb into the driver's seat. Glancing at the odometer, I notice the car has 77,433 miles on it.

77,450: Getting used to the car is difficult. Compared to a broken-down Chevy, the car drives smoothly, like glass. I think for a moment that maybe I should have chosen something less ostentatious, but time placed restraints on my actions that I could not accommodate. My shoulders relax slightly into the leather of the Maserati.

77,452: I pass a stoplight and notice two police cars on the right. I look forward and stay below the speed-limit. I don't look down at my hands. I don't look at what is lying in the passenger seat.

77,458: Turn right. Left. Right again. Two more lefts.

77,480: Have been driving for a while now and I think that an odor is emanating from the trunk in the back. I inhale deeply. Soft leather. The remnants of a strong cologne. And something else…I return my attention to the road.

77,483: A police car has been following me.

77,485: Still following me. His lights aren't on.

77,486: He begins to advance. He's right behind me. A layer of cold sweat breaks out on my forehead and my palms slip on the steering wheel. My eyes dart from the mirror to the windshield and back again. I take gulps of air, and on the last one, hold it.

77,487: He passes on my right and turns down a street. I roll down my window. The breath from my deep exhalation whisks outside and is left alone on a country road.

77,500: Had to stop for gas. I can definitely smell something now. It is pitch dark outside.

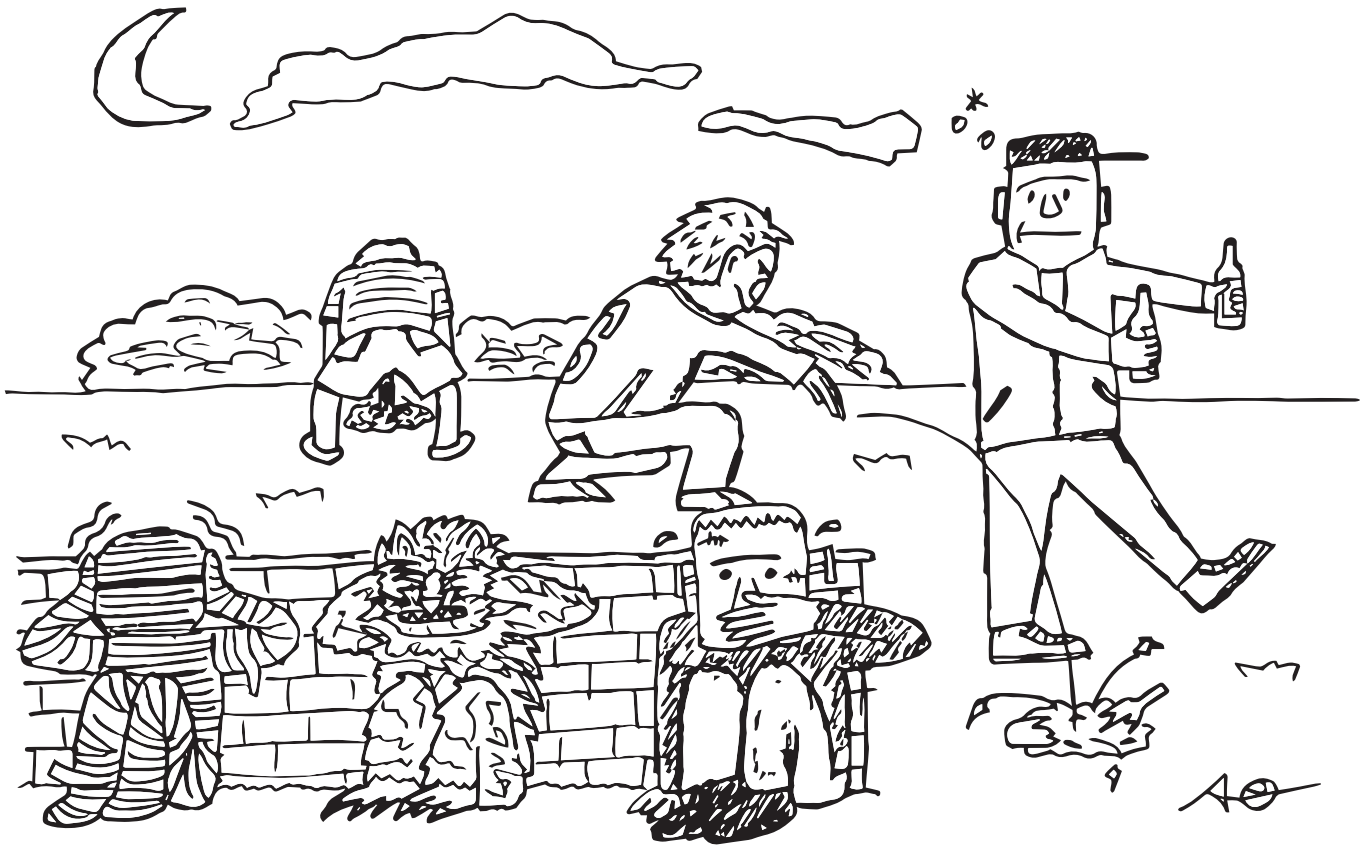
77,573: Dawn is at the edge of the horizon. My hands are dried but they reflect the red light from outside. I still have not looked at the passenger seat. My mind is strikingly empty. I continue to stare at the road. Softly, the knife next to me slides in and out of view.

77,580: Almost there. A few miles left to go. I can't stand the stench coming from the trunk. I can't look forward anymore. I have to do something. The emptiness in my mind is starting to fill with things I do not want to think about. The smell. I can't stand the smell.

77,697: Here. I pull up to the abandoned warehouse by the wharf and get out of the car. I walk around to the trunk, open it, and begin to pull out the body.

Comic Relief

by Andrew Oh



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