

## The Gamecock

Serving USC Since 1908

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Adam Snyder, Interim Editor in Chief  
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Stephanie Sonnenfeld, Assistant Viewpoints Editor

### IN OUR OPINION

## Movie didn't murder praying teenagers

The Kentucky teen who fired on a school prayer group, killing three of his classmates and wounding five others, is a sensational tragedy that's left three sets of parents grieving for their children.

But, if the murders weren't outrageous enough, the prosecutor in the case says the film "Basketball Diaries" may have been a factor that caused the teen to commit the act. In the movie, there's a dream sequence in which Leonardo DiCaprio takes a gun into his Catholic all-boys school and fires on his classmates.

And supposedly, seeing this movie just pushed the 14-year-old over the edge. Watching this piece of Hollywood production just made him kill other teens in prayer.

When will society get it into their heads that music, TV and film are not little red devils that sit on teens' shoulders and say "Do it! Do it!" whatever the illegal "it" is.

We're not saying young children should be exposed to the

### THE TOPIC

Condemning media for murder

### OUR OPINION

Put the blame where it belongs, directly in suspect's hands.

likes of "NYPD Blue" or middle-schoolers should be taken to R-rated movies. Children grow at different emotional stages, and there's a proper time for everything.

But to blame "Basketball Diaries" for the mad fluke made by an obviously mental-

ly ill teen is ludicrous. For every teen who does something that shocks society and then hides under "evil" TV, movie or music influences, there are thousands of teenagers and college students who watch the same television show, have seen the same movie or have listened to the same album and not gone on a mad killing spree.

In fact, many young adults have experienced controversial entertainment, like Marilyn Manson and Nine Inch Nails, "Beavis and Butt-Head," "Cop Killer" by Ice-T and the video game "Mortal Kombat" and still lead normal lives, or are even exceptional student or community leaders.

Put the blame where it belongs — in the hands of the assailant.

## Use caution when clearing Jocassee

South Carolina did a good thing when it purchased \$21 million worth of land from Duke Energy Corp. last month. This acreage, which is home to the Jocassee Gorge, was slated to become a natural preserve.

However, it was announced this week that the state hopes to cut some timber in the area. The wood will be sold and proceeds may go to aid in managing the 32,000 acres, The State newspaper said.

No, South Carolina isn't going into the lumber business. They're clearing some of the timber to supposedly "enhance" the wildlife habitat for animals, a common practice.

But, experts say that while this practice can help control the environment, it can also help com-

### THE TOPIC

S.C.'s choice to clear forest land

### OUR OPINION

It's imperative that care be taken to not permanently harm the Upstate.

mercial timber companies garner a lot of influence over the government

Other problems (as seen in the case of the Sumter National Forest) show cutting can sometimes benefit popular hunting game "at the expense of non-game species, such as migrating

birds that need heavy forests to survive," according to The State.

Sure, the cutting has the chance of posing no problems at all. But, it also could seriously damage a realm of the environment that could never repair the mistakes.

It would be a shame to see this beautiful portion of land end up damaged from environmental mismanagement thanks to the same government that purchased the land to save it.



### Quote, Unquote

"We are also concerned about the board's willingness to destroy our way of life just to satisfy their desire to see this project completed immediately."

Cliff Resident Councilmember Brian Gambrell, in a letter to USC President Dr. John Palms about the Greek village slated to be built near Cliff Apartments.

## Crisis doesn't ruin shopping day

### ERIN SHAW

Columnist

This column is not being written from the alcove of Student Media, but the warm recesses of my home in Birmingham, Ala.

I'm writing this last column of the semester here partly because it will be easier than writing it mid-last week of classes. The even bigger reason is because I want to trap the feelings I have right now, post-crisis.

Post-crisis means 12 hours after the bound-to-be-infamous "crash of Thanksgiving '97." To make a long story short, my mom, sister and I thought it would be safe to brave the mall the day after the day after Thanksgiving, but our trip was (nearly) cut short by an unfortunate accident, entailing wet roads, Mom's skidding Maxima and the rear end of an Aerostar minivan.

No one was hurt. There was no damage done to Mom's bumper, and

only minimal done to the blue travesty of 1980s design in front of us. We were safe, just a little shaken-up. But before I could even ascertain this, out came my soon-to-be symbol of lack of faith in human civility.

I thought she was going to attack my mother. And in a way, she did with words. She called Mom just about every name in the book, using the vocabulary of all the words not fit to print. The least of these included "stupid" and "hick," both of which prompted me to become the defensive speech and debater riled to the cause. It made me especially angry when I saw her license plate was from Hillsborough, where we moved from just two years ago. If she only knew she was naming herself and her own discourteous ways.

I told her there was no need to call my mother anything. It was an accident. She hydroplaned, her brakes locked and she was barely at crawl speed. It hurt me to hear this woman's ignorance. I tried not to stoop to her

level, trying to blame it on the shock of the collision. After all, I've been in several accidents, and I know how it feels to be jolted unexpectedly. Not pleasant.

But, the woman would not cease spouting her insulting words into our car. She proceeded to scream at us, saying she was transporting her pregnant daughter to her baby shower and everything was Mom's fault. Anything was our fault. Mom sat there quietly, absorbing all of this woman's pent-up anger and misdirected guilt.

My sister sat in the back of the car crying. In the back of my head I thought the pain this woman was inflicting was just out of ignorance, and I needed to take charge of the situation. I called the police and Dad. And I gave the woman the look of, "You're being ugly and nasty and hurting my mother!"

The pregnant girl was whisked away smiling by a passing relative. She was fine. Ironically, another pas-

senger was taken to the hospital, complaining of a pain in her "kidney." The police didn't issue Mom a ticket. They said she couldn't have been going over five miles per hour. The paramedics said not to let this ruin our shopping day.

Mom and Dad insisted we go to the Old Navy post-accident. They put on their best "that skirt is too short" faces despite the accident. But, I could tell Mom walked away with aches and pains from the accident, and not the kind the insurance policy covers.

We're not defined by how we handle Sunday drives in the countryside. Sure, they're deserved and meant to be enjoyed. But, I think true character is established in how we handle the accidents along the way, the unexpected jolts, nicks and hurts. I'm going to try to remember this when someone bumps into me. It will happen. It happens to everybody. That's why we call them "accidents."

## Letters prove amusing, aggravating

### Nikki LaRocque

Viewpoints Editor

If you're actually reading this, it will amaze me.

But, if you understand precisely what the hell I'm saying, that will be nothing short of divine intervention.

I enjoy journalism and writing for this paper, but if there's one thing I absolutely cannot stand, it's being misunderstood. And somehow, that goes along with being an editor for The Gamecock, unless you're a sports editor. It's hard to misunderstand articles that rehash the latest game's score.

But, in writing for Viewpoints, well, I haven't been this misunderstood since I was a toddler trying to tell my grandma I wanted vitamins, which came out as "bitowens." For some reason, she couldn't understand me. And for some reason, no matter what I write, there are those who can't fathom my English.

I'm not talking about the students who intelligently argue a point, with fact and logic backing up their argument. That's intellectually stimulating and interesting to me.

But, I just want to laugh in the face of those who rage, sputtering over their riled-up emotions and tripping over their own words. And the insults have been classic. We know we've done a good job up here when some guy leaves a message on our machines that simply and eloquently says, "Fags!" It amuses me to no end to know there's at least one male out there who thinks calling us homosexuals is somehow derogatory.

Letters to the editor are always a source of amusement. Some of my favorites are the ones that tell us what crappy, pathetic spellers we are and can't we get some decent copy editors when their own pieces are filled with horrors an English teacher would take delight in slashing with a red marker.

I've had my intelligence not only questioned, but outright denied. My parents have been encouraged to slap me for my "impertinence" (my family, however, has this idea that if you disagree with one another, we sit down and talk it over). The staff has been ridiculed for editorials they chose not to have a say in because they thought them "too controversial." For the same editorial, we'll get a letter saying we went too far, and then one screaming at us for not going far enough.

And somehow, people seem to think a 250-word limit for letters to the editor means they can write as much as they want and expect to be published as is. Others apparently have the belief that when I answer the phone, that means they have unlimited access to my time, and that I'm personally here to listen to their tirade and cluck my tongue in sympathy.

It starts getting annoying toward the end of the semester, particularly if a letter comes in from a student who "disagrees" with me passionately about

whatever it was I wrote, when in actuality they're making the same point I did. They were evidently too stupid to see that.

I've truly enjoyed raising the occasional ire of most of the major student organizations and administrations on campus. But, it's so outrageous to me when students get angry at some article or editorial and part of their argument against us is, "The Gamecock is a student paper. It should be for the students."

Oh please, whatever. Just because students are writing for The Gamecock doesn't mean we have absolute loyalty to other undergraduates and we should ignore other students or organizations when something less than nice occurs concerning them. If we just wrote happy little stories about how much money the Greeks are raising for charity we wouldn't be doing our job. We wouldn't be learning how to be journalists.

Try to understand that.

## The Gamecock

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### WHO WE ARE

The Gamecock is the student newspaper of The University of South Carolina and is published Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the fall and spring semesters and five times during the summer with the exception of university holidays and exam periods.

Opinions expressed in The Gamecock are those of the editors or author and not those of The University of South Carolina.

The Board of Student Publications and Communications is the publisher of The Gamecock.

The Department of Student Media is its parent organization.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

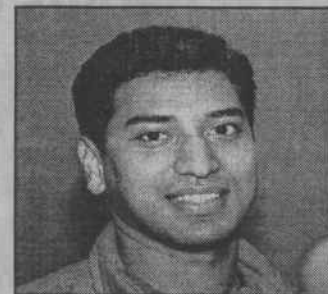
The Gamecock will try to print all letters received. Letters should be 200-250 words and must include full name, professional title or year and major if a student. Letters must be personally delivered by the author to

The Gamecock newsroom in Russell House room 333.

The Gamecock reserves the right to edit all letters for style, possible libel or space limitations. Names will not be withheld for any circumstances.

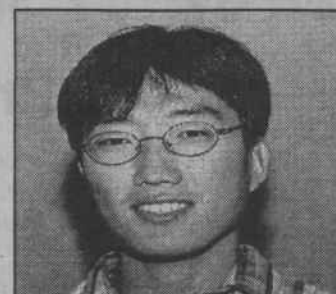
## VOICES

"Which exam has you the most worried?"



"All of them."

Cedric D'Costa  
Graduate Student  
Computer Engineering



"All of them."

Sky Ryu  
pre-Graduate Student  
Computer Science



"Modern contemporary American literature"

Claire Bourel  
English Junior