

Point Counter-Point

DAVIDSONIAN PERSPECTIVES

Should the Beltway snipers receive the death penalty?

Yes: Death is the only justice

By Richard Guyer '06

The issue in question is not whether the death penalty is a deterrent to crime, a form of retribution or even a comfort to the victims' families. All of those things may or may not be reasons to support the death penalty (although I believe some are).

The issue in question is whether the death penalty is simply justice. In this case, it is.

As a society, we must ask ourselves whether some crimes are so horrendous that the perpetrators can no longer be allowed to be a part of our society. Are there cases in which the only just thing to do is to remove a person from society altogether? Is it important for us to make a statement that some actions will simply not be tolerated?

The best way to make such a statement is to apply the death penalty to certain criminals. Many will contend that it would be worse punishment to spend a lifetime in prison, or to live out one's days in an Alaskan labor camp.

But there are three problems with this argument: First, there is no reason for American taxpayers to fund "three hots and a cot"

for Mr. Muhammad and Mr. Malvo from now until their death.

Secondly, our aim is not to be as *cruel* as possible (a point for which civil libertarians and the Eight Amendment will surely testify). And finally, death is the highest form of punishment that a society can inflict.

There is nothing in the world more valuable than a human life, and it is what most people hold dearest. Individuals often rank other things near it, and in some cases even higher (for example, Patrick Henry claimed to value liberty more than life).

Although an individual may choose to die rather than lose something else, there is nothing societies should hold more sacred than human life. As a result, societies should only take life away from a person as the ultimate form of punishment (and in no other circumstances). Indeed, from a societal standpoint there is nothing more that *can* be done to punish a criminal than to execute him.

There is no doubt that, if convicted, John Muhammad and John Malvo deserve the highest form of punishment we can deliver as a society. They deserve the death penalty.

No: Penalty violates human rights

By Clinton Rickards '04

How should we deal with those who commit the most heinous acts of murder, men like John Allen Muhammad and John Lee Malvo? Despite their actions, I stand firmly opposed to the death penalty being applied in their cases.

In 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a pledge among nations to promote fundamental rights as the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.

The Declaration proclaims each person's right to protection from the deprivation of life, and it categorically states that no one shall be subjected to cruel or degrading punishment.

The death penalty, the premeditated and cold-blooded killing of prisoners in state custody, violates both of these rights.

But aren't some crimes so unspeakable and heinous that the criminal should be executed? No. Human rights are inalienable, and are accorded equally to every individual. Whether or not Muhammad and Malvo show remorse or not, whether they killed one or 50 people, whether they believe they are justified in their actions or not, they are still people.

Criminals give up their freedom, not their rights.

The death penalty is a symbol, not a solution. I have the deep-

est sympathy for the victims of these violent crimes. However, the death penalty teaches that under the "right circumstances" killing is right. Yet, there is no "right" circumstance for violence, especially government-sanctioned execution. The only way to demonstrate that killing is wrong is to refrain from killing those who kill. I know it is a cliché, but why do we kill people who kill people to show that killing people is wrong?

What this debate boils down to is justice. The crimes allegedly committed by Muhammad and Malvo were heinous and unspeakable, and they should not go unpunished.

But at the same time, we must not continue the cycle of violence started by these two men. Although they have committed horrible crimes, they should still be afforded the basic rights guaranteed to all people, which include the right to life and freedom from inhumane or degrading punishment.

The premeditated and cold-blooded murder that is capital punishment violates both these rights. If justice is to be served, it can only come from supporting the very rights that America, and the world, stands by.

And this means being firmly and unequivocally opposed to the executions of the Beltway snipers.

With free booze and single women, weddings are worth the hassle

I find myself getting invited to more and more weddings these days. Seems like those college relationships have blossomed into deep and committed love, or else she finally wore the poor guy down. Either way, I have a couple of weddings to attend in the coming months.

The mere mention of the word "wedding" is enough to make most guys my age curl up into a fetal position for about five hours.

It's like my dad once told me, "Son, not many guys like going to weddings... even their own." Weddings are an inherently

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feminine event—not that there's anything wrong with that. It's just that most guys would rather pierce themselves with a stapler than attend a wedding. I used to be the same way.

Recently I had the pleasure of attending a friend's wedding. And I'm standing at the bar throwing back drinks like they're free—because they are—when I stumble upon the realization that this whole wedding thing isn't so bad.

After the lame ceremony (more on this in a second), you go to the reception. And if you can ignore the bad DJ/band, things are



The Senior Source

by Jeremy Trantham

really great. They have free food, which is usually quite edible, and if it's not who cares? It's free. And then of course there is the open bar.

Open bar. Are there any words that sound better together in the English language? Probably not.

And the open bar isn't even the best part about the reception. It's definitely the single women in attendance. Particularly the bridesmaids.

When a single woman attends a wedding that isn't her own, she becomes emotionally vulnerable, wondering, "When is this going to happen for me?" or, "Will it ever happen for me?"

If you are the type of guy that doesn't mind preying on the vulnerable, then this is what you'd call a target-rich environment. Bridesmaids are even better targets because they always have to wear the worst looking dresses this side of Milan. Not only do the, "Will I ever get married?" questions pop up, but there's also the element of, "This outfit makes me look fat." Womanizers everywhere use this to their advantage.

So the reception redeems the wedding as an institution worthy

Festival paints misleading picture of our diversity

By Ameer Patel '06

Davidson's Diversity Week began on Saturday with the International Festival in the Union Atrium. The festival gave minority students a chance to display their rich heritages through music, costume, and of course, food.

But it would be a lie to say that Davidson is culturally diverse. I don't think I need to rattle off a long list of statistics to prove this point.

Is it really a coincidence that the only event spotlighting the minorities at Davidson occurred during Family Weekend? As parents flooded onto campus, they were greeted with displays of diversity around every corner.

And what a great festival it was. The booths of each country represented in the Atrium were as impressive as the students who took part in the festivities.

To the untrained eye, the entire scene would have passed off as just another event that a diverse student body would hold. There were dances and songs from around the world, and everywhere you turned, you were treated to a different flag, costume, ethnicity and language.

As my mom and I were walking out of the Union on Saturday, she turned to me and said, "See, Ameer, there is diversity at Davidson."

Having heard my continuous complaints to the contrary, she was one of the many parents misled by the International Festival.

Isn't this exactly what it was intended to do? Having participated in it myself, I don't mean to disparage the event. But as much of a success as it was, it continued to give parents a false perception of diversity on Davidson's campus.

I remember coming to admissions events a year ago and seeing a seemingly diverse campus, as suggested by an award-winning step show and the internationally-themed fliers placed

Their eyes immediately see the dozens of flags in the Union — when all I can think about is the lack of diversity in my classes day after day.

tered to every wall. Even before coming to visit, I remember getting those glossy brochures with pictures of smiling Davidson students representing every ethnicity possible.

Having been here for only a few months, I can already see through those misperceptions. However, my parents, along with many other students, are still being misled. Their eyes immediately see the dozens of flags hanging in the Union—when all I can think about is the lack of diversity in my classes day after day.

The numbers are too appalling not to rattle off: Out of 1,673 students last year, eighty-nine were African American (5.3%), 42 were Asian American (2.5%) and 47 were Hispanic or Latino (2.9%).

This year's freshman class includes only fourteen African Americans, which school officials openly admit is not nearly good enough.

I can't blame anyone for trying to increase the presence of diversity on campus. Could you imagine what kind of event would have replaced the International Festival if the only culture being represented the white, Christian, English-speaking majority?

As Diversity Week continues, we should put these issues into proper context. How can we begin to solve the problems we face here if they are kept hidden behind a façade of deception?

of your presence. But what of the suckfest that is the ceremony I was thinking of ways to improve the ceremony one day when I was channel surfing and the perfect solution fell into my lap: the Travel channel.

Vegas baby. Vegas.

A wedding in Las Vegas has many advantages. The town is just one big bachelor party anyway. In fact, I think Vegas could legitimately change its name to, "World's Biggest Bachelor Party" (WBBP). It just fits.

Sure, my ideal ceremony isn't exactly every little girl's dream wedding. But then, what is? I'm betting there has to be at least one girl out there who shares my vision. And when I find her, just might propose on the spot.

College demands

Boy, does life at Davidson seem like a 400 student-athlete in effigy.

I'm referring to most Davidson students regarding a position on campus.

Three weeks into the course, but I'm still in order.

Somewhere a question became a question at Davidson.

Sure, I single out most of the articles (most of the articles).

At no point did I create some kind of campus.

It would have been 1000 words a column, that Davidson's most impressive.

In light of the fact that, however, it makes on things and once instead.

(in terms of what Davidson teaches most do not expect.)

That's a simple (mostly athlete) had just kicked.

People I have contact with, so

One alumnae hate Davidson's 15% development.

There is always Davidson adolescence, when our 'grown-up' are

pid in their own. Where was published.

Funny that about that color, such as, "Obviously well known that also prove that