Editorial: In the crosshairs

Fear. Americans seem to have a newfound understanding of the word and with good reason. Since the terrorist attacks the idea of looking over our shoulders has become something we accept as a necessity. Now we have yet another reason. There is a maniac stalking the Washington D.C. area, including Maryland and Virginia, who has taken to shooting random people with a high powered rifle of some kind from a substantial distance. As if Americans don’t have enough to worry about; here comes a new breed of cowardly serial killer.

This killer is different from most famous serial killers and spree killers of the past in that he (we’ll just assume the shooter is a he for now) doesn’t have a pattern. He has a Motsus Operendi (MO) in that he fires only one shot, whether he gets a kill or not, and most of the shootings have taken place in high traffic areas with several avenues of escape. He also seems to target people doing mundane, everyday things like filling a gas tank, walking down the street and sitting on a bench. One of his targets was a 13-year-old boy who was walking from his aunt’s car into his school. The boy survived, but is still hospitalized.

These killings really shake the faith people have in law enforcement. The simple fact is, this killer picks people, shoots them and gets away. He’s done it numerous times and the police don’t seem to be any closer to catching him, unless there are details that aren’t being revealed to the public. We often think of murder as a crime that takes serious planning to carry out without getting caught. This misconception comes largely from movies and the ways they often depict murder stories. In reality, all one really has to do to get away with murder is shoot someone with a common ammunition and never get close enough to the victim to leave a trace of himself.

The D.C. area law enforcement is, however, bringing out the big guns. They have petitioned the U.S. government for use of their Army RC-7 surveillance planes as a tool to watch over the city for the sniper. Planes with cameras that can see through any weather and at night flying over a city with a population of approximately 5 million people seems a bit Orwellian. This is another example of the trade of privacy for safety, or perceived safety, a concept that has been a prevalent element in our country as of late.

This type of crime touches us all on many different levels, despite our individual lots in life, because of its randomness. This guy doesn’t care about money, college degrees, or a person’s prestige. He stalks his prey and kills them, plain and simple.

According to a tarot card (the death card) that was found near one crime scene, he believes himself to be God. He certainly does have power over many people, namely the ones in his scope, but he is no god. He’s a powerful maniac. Realizing that, the way he creates fear is the way to understand why he does what he does, because that will reveal what he is afraid of.

Innuendos: The pretender

When people first enter into a relationship they are usually hit by infatuation. As time goes on, the two may fall in love with each other. What happens when people in a relationship feel nothing after a while? When the love story ends, yet the pages keep turning, what is one to do?

I feel that this is a common problem in a relationship. The spark which once kept a couple enthralled with each other burns out, but the two remain together despite their dissatisfaction with the relationship. These people are merely pretending to be committed to each other. Even though the love has died, they remain with each other because a piece of them does not want to let go. They are only going through the motions of a relationship.

I believe that people stay together because they are comfortable with each other. Over the span of the relationship, people develop a certain level of security with their partner. It is much easier to stay with someone you have known for a while rather than go out and brave the harsh waters of the dating pool.

People are also emotionally sound willing to commit.

Letters to the Editor: The Rider News welcomes letters on all subjects of interest to the campus community. Letters must be typed and include the name, address, phone number and signature of the author for verification. Send to The Rider News via e-mail (ridernews@rider.edu), campus mail, or hand deliver to Centennial House. All letters must be received by midnight Monday preceding publication. The Rider News reserves the right to edit all letters for space and clarity.

Quote of the Week

“You can discover what your enemy fears most by observing the means he uses to frighten you.” — Eric Hoffer

This Week in History ...

Oct. 14, 1964
Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. won the Nobel Peace Prize for his extensive promotion of human rights.

Oct. 15, 1965
On this day the first draft card was burned in protest of the United States’ escalating military involvement in Vietnam.

Oct. 17, 1933
Albert Einstein emigrated to the United States from Nazi Germany.

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Sports column dropped the ball

By Michael D. Lovullo

HAMiLTON, N.J. -- Disgusted with the state of sports in his school, an 18-year-old senior has experienced repeated bouts with depression in the superficial surroundings of his suburban town.

Tammy Wilkins, 17, who has always considered herself somewhat distant from the "ash-brushed, gluten-free realm everyone considers reality," has finally come to realize that all hope is lost.

"Death becomes us all," says Wilkins, chucking her mask-black dyed hair and cringing in her red and black spiralized sweater beside the school dumpster. "You can’t fight the circle of life that leads to the grave, so why try?"

Desperate for some agreeable alternative, Wilkins sought the advice of her equally distraught peers. After scouring her high school's student body for persons wearing any ensemble including Army boots, leather pants or a Marilyn Manson t-shirt, she found "the one with which [she] can identify," her heterosexual life-partner Lena McJeffries.

"Like finally, someone who’s totally, like...um...I mean, who’s real," Wilkins confides, "at least in the dark.

"It’s like the dark is the only place where we can find our own feet in the middle of the road," says McJeffries. "I went through a bit of depression in my early years, and you know, that's one of the things that just kind of...I keep finding out that it can be a place where students have access to democracy and self-expression that they can't dress the part?" McJeffries asks, "After all," she said, "What’s the point of being disturbed and feeling the hopelessness of the world on your shoulders, if you can’t dress the part?"

The Unknown News is a parody column and should not be taken seriously.

Letter to the Editor:

Sports column dropped the ball

I am writing in reference to Jared Vickalo’s column “Lack of Respect.” I will start by saying I am probably one of the biggest supporters of Rider athletics, but I’m also probably one of its biggest critics.

Sports Illustrated (SI) did not make a mistake in not ranking Rider in the Top 200 Division I athletic schools. Rider was accurately ranked outside of the Top 200. SI did not write blatant falsities in their article. They only wrote the information they received. SI either phoned, mailed, e-mailed or faxed Rider and asked for information about the athletic program. Someone at Rider decided to lie and state that Rider is in the Top 200. SI looked for spirit boosting events that Ludacris performed at Midnight Madness because that is the only criteria we could get points for. Jared was disappointed in watching Rider at this fall. However, Baraka recently published a poem entitled “Somebody Blew Up America” that has a very negative view of the government that had come under harsh criticism and has even been called anti-Semitic. Rider has since decided Baraka will not be invited to speak because the school lacks the security to deal with the event.

In my opinion, the poem when read in its entirety is not anti-Semitic. Baraka attacks those responsible for terrorism and violence, of the past and present, from presidential and civil rights activists to slavery, Middle Eastern terrorism to Vietnam. He even condemns those who participated in the Holocaust and anyone who did nothing to stop it. I wonder how a person who lists all that is bad in the world and includes violence against Jews can be anti-Semitic.

Still, regardless of his poem’s content, it is his right to say what he wants. His opinion cannot be censored and Rider students have the right to hear his opinion. I urge students to gain access to his writing. Especially after the speech by Edward James Olmos and the events of Unity Day, a speaker who promotes civil rights should be able to speak freely.

I believe myself to be a Rider student. It is spoken like Olmos and Baraka that push Rider students to ask questions and want to learn more. A university is supposed to be a place where students have access to all different points of view, not just opinions the administration would like to hear.

After reading “Somebody Blew Up America” one may ask, who is he accusing? It most definitely seems to me that he blames the U.S. government and President Bush for their inability to heed warnings and take action before Sept. 11. His poem attacks U.S. foreign policy and its results. Baraka has been accused of being anti-Semitic for a passage of the poem, which when taken out of context may seem extremely offensive. However, in its entirety the poem just seems to say what some Americans may think but are afraid to say.

Americans must not be afraid to demand their rights and use them. It is not unpatriotic to speak out against a government who did too little too late or whose foreign policies may have brought violence upon the nation.

Keith Kelley
Senior
Business Education

World Musings:

Free speech hypocrisy

We hear on the news that the Congress is behind the President in his plans against terrorism and Saddam Hussein. It is reported that public opinion is building up in favor of the President. I don’t believe that is true. What we see is a nation that is siding against anyone labeling who speaks out against government action as un-American, traitors, anti-democratic and supporters of terrorism.

America appears to have lost more than the lives of innocent people and American landmarks on Sept. 11; it appears to have lost its beliefs in civil liberties. Those people who oppose war have a First Amendment right to say so. It is this right that sets Americans apart from those being oppressed by Hussein. It is this right and many others, such as the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of religion that makes us Americans and makes us proud to be Americans.

It is ironic that the same government that has said that we must fight terrorism and continue to live our lives despite our fears has neglected the rights of its own citizens in this “war on terrorism.” Beginning on Sept. 11, and continuing to this day, many citizens would rather keep quiet about their opinions that appear to be unpatriotic. Imagine how mothers of teenagers must feel right now; they are against terrorism in every way but do not want to see their sons go to war if a draft was put into place.

In our society and even within our own school we see how the First Amendment has often been brushed aside in the past year. Many students may feel compelled to protest the looming war with Iraq but feel they will be labeled as un-American if they do so.

It had been planned that Amiti Baraka the New Jersey poet laureate, very well known for his work on civil rights, would come to speak at Rider this fall. However, Baraka recently published a poem entitled “Somebody Blew Up America” that has a very negative view of the government that had come under harsh criticism and has even been called anti-Semitic. Rider has since decided Baraka will not be invited to speak because the school lacks the security to deal with the event.

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