



Forget Marc Lepine

On December 6th, 1989, Marc Lepine took out his new, semi-automatic weapon and shot 14 women. Then he turned the gun on himself. The note that was recovered from his body explained the reason he acted in this manner: women and feminists were the source of his life-long problems.

Because of his note, Marc Lepine has come to represent those who commit crimes against women. That is wrong. Discount the note.

People get angry when you call his actions an isolated incident, but that is just what they were. He acted as an individual, a madman with misdirected anger. That Marc Lepine used women as the focus of his crime is not indicative of the broader reality that exists today, or that existed then.

Yes, there are issues of violence against women that must be considered daily. Marc Lepine's heinous crime is not one of them.

By remembering December 6th, we are allowing those who are guilty of the more subtle crimes against women to take a step back. To absolve themselves of guilt by creating distance between them and the issue. It is easy for someone to look at this extreme example and reassure themselves that they are not anything like Marc Lepine, and just walk away without giving it another thought.

We must instead remember that there are women who won't walk home at night because they are afraid of the shadows. The shadows which will not likely part to reveal a Marc Lepine, but which could reveal any of the nameless, faceless individuals who are committing crimes against women in our society.

You have to wonder what we are accomplishing by remembering this one crime. Will any of those who are guilty of any of the multitude of crimes against women take notice? Will it make them change their ways?

The few Marc Lepines in the world aren't listening, and we can do nothing to make them listen. They do not represent the general reality of a woman's existence. Those like he direct their crimes at the first excuse that comes

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along. Marc Lepine used women as his cause, the next one will find another reason, and another target — it is not only women who have to fear these people.

We have a much bigger problem in our society than those few and far between who are like Marc Lepine.

We have to consider the countless numbers of men out there who abuse their partners, be it physically or otherwise. It is these men who don't make the headlines that are the problem.

People like Marc Lepine will never be completely eliminated. They will always be there, no matter how many poems and letters we write, regardless of the marches and support groups in which we participate. Instead we should continue promoting awareness of all types of crimes against women. This will certainly help, and every woman who has found the courage to fight back and leave a violent situation has benefited from this support.

Forget Marc Lepine; it is impossible to rid ourselves of the type of person who would ruthlessly kill fourteen innocent women.

Marc Lepine was a depraved individual who does not deserve to be remembered. Should we remember the fourteen women? Yes, of course. They are just a few of the many women who have died at the hands of men — all of whom we should remember. But should we use Marc Lepine as an example? No. He does not represent those whom we have to fear while walking alone at night. It is time to forget his name, and remember all of the victims.

No one can protect themselves from the random and senseless violence which Marc Lepine represents.

Instead, it is time to realise that those we fear are not the names in the headlines, but the guy who lives down the street, potentially someone you live with, or who offered to walk you home after that party. It is this fear that we must fight against. It is time to identify these criminals in our society who are being overlooked. And it is time to remember their victims.

JEN HORSEY
& DANIELLE BOUDREAU

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LETTERS

The Grawood

Gazette Editor,

As a former Dalhousie student still living in Halifax, it is always nice to still be able to pick up a copy of the Gazette when I see one available. As a former employee of the Grawood I was very happy to see that the Gazette finally recognized the importance of the Grawood to the Dalhousie community by allotting approximately three quarters of a page of last week's issue to articles on the bar. Unfortunately, that was about all that impressed me about your dedication to the Grawood.

Both writers made it quite apparent that they believed the Grawood had many shortfalls compared to other bars in the metro area. It should be known that you would be hard-pressed to find a staff that is better trained or a staff that displays such a high level of professionalism as that of the Grawood. At the Grawood, the patrons and their well-being come first. Recognition in this regard must be given to their manager, Debbie Brown. It seems to me that during a few of my visits to other Halifax establishments, including the Palace/Jerry's, that some patrons under the influence have left those bars with either broken bones or with their chins forcibly meeting the sidewalk at the exit. These incidents were not caused by other patrons but by the staff. Try to find that at the Grawood.

Debbie Brown has done a very good job ensuring that all other aspects of the bar are not only competitive, but first rate compared to other establishments. These areas include music (better than the Palace), the menu (better than the Palace), the temperature (better than the Palace), the prices (better than the Palace) the diverse forms of entertainment (better than the Palace), and the clientele (better than the Palace).

When critiquing the Grawood, one must be careful to remember that the Dalhousie community is very large and diverse, and management must appeal to as much of that community as possible. The Grawood does an incredible job reflecting the interests of many students. So to those expecting to find within the walls of the Grawood a narrow establishment similar to the Palace, Jerry's, or any other bar in Halifax, I am pleased to say that you just won't find it.

Kirk Cox

Dear Editor,

After reading the "Grawood Experiment" article in your last issue, I feel compelled to reply to the comments made about the Thursday night music. Mr. Cullen and Ms. Robinson made a number of points worthy of rebuttal, but as the DJ, I'll keep my

letter to music matters.

On Thursday nights we offer our patrons a music format based on popular tastes. While this obviously won't suit 100 per cent of the crowd, a consistently packed dance floor seems proof enough that the format works. Sure, songs get doubled up now and again, but this is in response to requests and what people are dancing to.

There are many bars in Halifax, each offering different styles of music. For example if you like jazz, try the Birmingham, there's country at Wildheart's, and the Studio offers progressive dance music. The format for these bars attract the people who like these types of music. Don't blame the bar (or me) if we play the music that packs the floor.

I always appreciate hearing feedback and thanks for your perspective.

DJ Shane

Operation elimination

To the Editor,

I am deeply concerned about President Cox's opinion quoted in the November 30th issue of the Gazette.

Being an advocate of a complete merger of the Halifax universities, Cox states that he wants to eliminate "all the department heads, all the faculty department heads, all the VP academics, all the chairs."

Wow, what a plan. Sounds like the French Revolution with all these heads rolling.

Let me utter some doubt about this Ramboesque manoeuvre. What Cox is planning is not very new or original. We are used to this kind of logic these days. It says: eliminate welfare, eliminate education, it's time for cuts. If we do not eliminate, according to the logic, the deficit will kill us. Rarely does someone ask: What is the deficit, and who benefits from it? No, instead every political decision is rated for its impact on the dollar.

I know Canada has a huge deficit and it is time to save some money and a low dollar, of course, can put a lot of people out of work, but I think there are several ways of saving money. The way it is done right now in Ontario, the U.S.A., and perhaps everywhere around the world is one way.

But do you sometimes ask yourself if this one way has more to do with the certain beliefs of certain people than with an objective shortage of cash? Is it a coincidence that a tax stop has to be paid by people who are not even in the position to pay taxes because they have no jobs?

Is it a coincidence that recycling programs and funding of public transport systems are among the first to go?

And what happens when all this money is saved? Will we then start spending more on social programs again? I do not think so.

I do think that all these programs are being eliminated because they are not considered important. The programs are useless in the eyes of people who think they are self-sufficient and who only want to pay for their own needs: "I do not need health care, I have my own doctor."

Concerning the education cuts, I think a fair and equal society needs as many people as possible who are informed and can take part in public democratic discourse. Accessible education is an achievement of a democratic society. Democracy does not only mean to cast a vote every three or four years. Is this banal?

The argument goes further. Perhaps Preston Manning and friends want to exclude certain people from this dialogue, or do not want a dialogue at all. Perhaps this debt crisis is a good opportunity to achieve this goal?

Just a guess.
I do not think President Cox is like Manning but I do think we should be against the elimination of academic positions, especially as students.

Christian Haak