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OPINION

Media stereotyping: let's stay ignorant and scared

By **JEROME ENGELBERTS**
Opinions Editor

As the case against alleged murderer Scott Dyleski is being prepared, I'm mentally rewinding to the day I caught a first glimpse of the story in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, headed by a trio of photos of Scott in increasing stages of "gothness."

It's plain as day: first, you are a well-adjusted, reasonable thinking adolescent. Then, you let your hair grow (trench coats will enter your dreams). Next, you actually go out and buy black garments. This is when you step over the threshold. You put the black garments on and listen to (insert name of appropriate musical artists here).

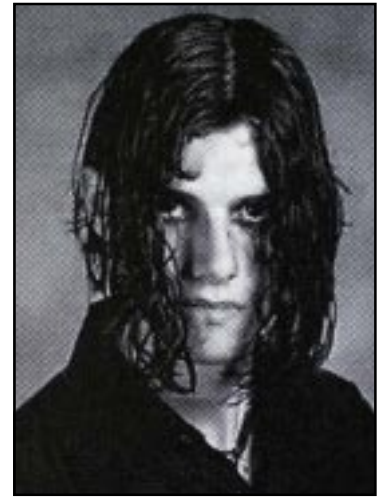
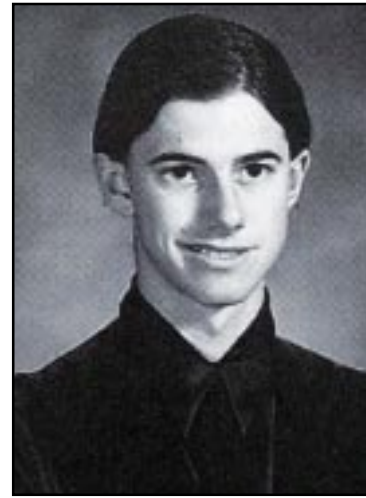
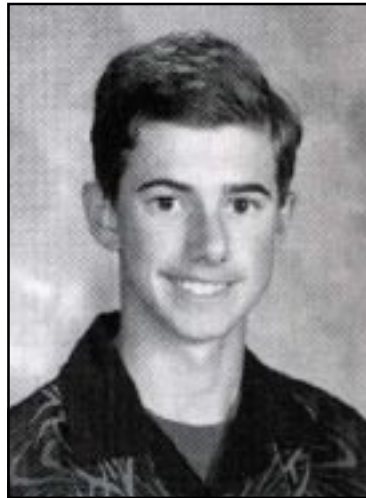
Before you know it, you'll be sitting there thinking: "gee wiz, I'm going to kill that nice lady next door." Or something to that effect ("shoot up my high school;" "bomb a government building;" "get me a pilot's license and find some plane to hijack").

Mm-hmm, yeah, that sounds reasonable. Now some of us real-

ize that reasoning in the aforementioned manner is simplistic, and won't hold up to scrutiny. But in this case the *San Francisco Chronicle* and other media that was running with the "Scott triglyph" are betting that we'll be suitably impressed and cast judgment on this kid. Because he IS a kid, no matter the severity of the crime, and assuming he actually did it.

What bothers me about the presentation in the media is how a few pictures (never mind the article itself) are used to manipulate public opinion. And if they weren't put there to do that, then the editor of the (front) page was lacking in judgment about the effect the photos would have.

The scary part is that A) we can be manipulated that easily, and that B) apparently, mankind hasn't learned some of the lessons that could have been learned from WW2 (only 60 years ago, and still painfully fresh in the memory of many people). Stereotyping doesn't do any justice to individuals, and simple solutions don't solve complex problems. Just as you cannot blame a certain group of people (typecast



Series of photos that ran on the front page of the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

by ethnicity, religion, musical taste, or otherwise) for problems in society; you cannot simply make the correlation between Goth music and, for example, teen depression, teen violence, aberrant behavior, or an urge to make pipe bombs.

Take me, for example: I'm not that young, comb my (not-as-black-as-it-used-to-be hair slicked straight back; and like to wear Italian suits - including the leather sport coat). That would stereotype me as a Mafia hit man. Therefore, assuming

the appropriate photo is added, I could be subjected to media coverage connecting me with, say, loansharking. Public opinion would be slanted against me just because I look like someone's stereotypical idea of a mobster. Problem, and case, solved.

How is this different from saying "he looks like a gangbanger, so he must be involved in dealing crack", or "he looks Jewish, so he's bound to be good with money"?

By not thinking, and subcon-

sciously subscribing to manipulation like that, people have been discriminated against, suffered, and in some cases died - just because they looked a certain way.

If there is one thing we change about the world in general, and how humans connect with each other, it's this: we can stop judging by shallow group stereotypes. We can encourage the media to stop trying to play us for idiots.

And last, but not least: we can demand that our politicians do likewise.

CAMPUS COMMENT >>>

Did the media slant the Scott Dyleski story?



BRYAN ROY
Political Science

"When you live a (Goth) lifestyle like that kid, you're going to do something stereotypical."



RENZO ADA
Communication

"I don't think I would make a judgment. All I go was information"



GABE VILA
Japanese Language

"No. If only because of the wording "dark, gothic, quiet. Colombine, anyone?"



KEYA PATEL
Political Science

"No, they set it up so you already have an opinion"

TOMO YO
Political Science

"No, it's not fair. If you look a certain way you're made out to have certain behavior"