

Exide Late to Exit Battery Recycling Plant : Should School Shootings Receive Mass Media Attention?

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Staff Writer

Over a decade ago in Vernon, California, Exide Technologies opened a battery recycling plant to recycle lead found in batteries. According to the Exide Technologies company website, they recycle 99 percent of all lead received at their recycling plants and they currently have three battery recycling plants in the U.S. According to the Los Angeles Times, government officials investigated and found batteries being disposed inappropriately, which makes it clear that the recycling plant in Vernon is not environment friendly.

Federal officials discovered illegal storage and transportation of hazardous waste inside the recycling plant. During a 2013 inspection, trucks of plastic waste were found parked in the staging area of the plant with puddles of liquid underneath. It can be speculated that those puddles had high levels of lead. The plant was then officially shut down after over a decade of pollution, according to the Los Angeles Times.



Lead often has a negative effect on the health of children and adults. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, young children who are exposed to lead have a high chance of brain damage, developmental delays and even death. People are commonly infected by lead poisoning through long-term lead exposure, which is why the plant

should have been closed years ago before more lead could leak into the surrounding environment and cause more damage. Without proper disposal, lead leaks harm local soil as well as people. County officials have also taken the responsibility to replace soil that has been contaminated by lead in several neighborhoods surrounding the plant.

After years of harm to its surroundings, the Exide plant finally closes. However, hopefully in the future we can learn how to prevent such events from happening again. Lead poisoning is not only a current thing, it can also affect the lives of many people in the future as well, which is why we should be more careful when disposing hazardous materials such as lead.

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ANGELA YANG
Editor in Chief

With the increase of online reporting comes the unfortunate reality of newspapers acting quickly in order to have the most read story, oftentimes leading to insensitive coverage.

However, this does not mean that we should not cover these tragedies at all. A greater danger and offense is posed if this occurs. Not to cover a school shooting is to pretend as though everything is okay, not to honor and remember those whose lives were lost, to not pay tribute to these lost futures.

Insensitive reporting is the reason the infamous (albeit, unflattering) catchphrase "if it bleeds, it leads" was coined. Clearly, mass media attention needs to come in a positive form: strictly informing the public and not intruding on the families' mourning. Even so, it is impossible to prevent mass media attention. But through responsible and sensitive reporting, media attention can actually promote awareness of gun control and mental health care issues. While this does not ensure that anything can change, it increases the possibility. To give people knowledge is to give them power—the power to fight for greater change, to ensure that there will be no more school shootings.

CAROLINE REN
Editor in Chief

Too much media focus on the tragedies like school shootings can ultimately be detrimental. The intrusiveness of cameras and microphones interrupts time that should be given to victims' families to grieve. Even worse, mass media coverage adds onto the mindset that extremity elicits attention, which can influence other future acts of violence.

According to CNN, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Johns Hopkins University Katherine Newman states, "The shooting is the last act in a long drama: a search for acceptance and recognition. [...] Suddenly, [the shooter] is getting the attention he has been craving." While media coverage is not the primary reason that shootings happen, it can contribute to the motive in a dangerous way.

Moreover, decades of media coverage have failed to result in any kind of concrete legislation for either gun control or mental health care. If the goal of any medium is to create a positive outcome or at least to minimize the feedback loop of violence, it needs to drastically change its approach.

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SAMMIE CHEN



NO 'HO'LDING BACK

Zaytuna Carries Torch for Muslim Education

ELTON HO
Copy Editor

Upon reviewing one unique California school, WASC Senior Vice President Richard Winn called it a "life-transforming experience." He wasn't referring to AHS, but to a school equally as impressive: Zaytuna College. In March, Zaytuna became the first Islamic university in the U.S. to be accredited by WASC.

Although the liberal arts college is still small, Zaytuna's accreditation is no less significant. With the tenuous relationship between the U.S. and some Islamic countries, scholars versed in Islamic studies would undeniably be valuable for the country to have. Perhaps more importantly, Muslim students and colleges may finally be accepted as equals to any other in the nation.

But of course, with every step taken by Muslims in the U.S., the predictable naysayers will try to discredit the achievement. In regard to Zaytuna, Fox News concocted the headline "Muslim college co-founded by anti-Israel firebrand receives accreditation." In spite of the glowing review from WASC, the article presents the college as suspicious and threatening, rather than something to be welcomed.

Critics should understand that Islam is not incompatible with Western society, as Zaytuna's curriculum addresses. Alongside Arabic and Islamic law, Zaytuna students read Wordsworth, study rhetoric and perform community service, according to the Washington Post — no different than any of us.

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'No Judgment' Gym Bans Woman for Improper Transgender Treatment

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Staff Writer

On Feb. 28 in Midland, Michigan Yvette Cormier lost her Planet Fitness gym membership for her negative behavior toward a transgender woman in the gym's locker rooms. According to CNN, club management felt that the tone with which Cormier claimed she was concerned for her own safety and privacy of other female members was inappropriate. After she expressed her complaints to the front desk and was told about the gym's "no-judgment" policy, she continued to return the week after to spread the news of the "man"

in the locker room to other female gym members. Cormier should not have been quick to discriminate against Carlotta Sklodowska solely because she was transgender.

Although Cormier was told of the gym's "no-judgment" policy that allowed people to use the locker rooms according to their self-identified genders, she still judged

Sklodowska, based off the fact that she was transgender. Not only did she intrude on that policy, but her actions created an uncomfortable and intimidating environment for Sklodowska. Cormier's penalty was well-deserved since she was disrespectful of the individual's privacy, safety and general rights.

However, this is not the only case in which a transgender person was discriminated against. According to the

National Center for Transgender Equality, 63 percent of the transgender population experiences serious acts of discrimination at work, in schools, in medical fields and more. Transgender people cannot continue to live their lives normally if they are discriminated against. The judgments and biases against transgender people are unfair, placing heavy and unnecessary burdens on them. In this day and age, transgender acceptance should be a naturally occurring thing in society. Judgment towards transgenders must urgently stop.

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