

## **Some of Lindsay Kasmer's Blog Postings**

### **Absolutes**

By studying the Rwandan genocide I have learned that some things are not absolutes. People are not absolutes. By reading the graphic novel, *Deogratias: A Tale of Rwanda*, I have been given a new insight into others. This novel allowed its readers to see into the soul of a Hutu killer. Even though Deogratias was mentally disturbed, the graphic novel allowed me to feel pity for him. It also showed me that just because someone does something wrong, that doesn't make him inherently bad. "Good" people can do awful things, for whatever reasons. And the same works in reverse, "bad" people can do good things. The world we live in is not a black and white picture; there are variations and shades of gray everywhere we look. These shades may be difficult to see because we often want to label someone and then be done. If we label them, then we no longer need to think about it: they are what the label says. However, this cannot lead to anything good. We need to understand that labels are not absolute. People change, grow, and surprise.

### **A New Light**

The typical definition of a neighbor is someone who lives near another, and this was my definition as well. However, this AH120 class has broadened my horizons. I find that my new definition is closer to the tertiary definition of "neighbor" from Dictionary.com. They stated that a neighbor is "one's fellow human being." Distance no longer matters; my neighbor could live down the hall, down the street, or across the world. Defiance College is a very small school, and this means that we often know a lot of our fellow students. Through these acquaintances we form friendships and lasting bonds. These bonds allow of to call one another our neighbors, no matter where life takes us. We may not always live down the hall from each other, or even in the same room, but we can still be neighbors because we are fellow human beings and we are friends.

### **A Side We'll Never Know**

The Trayvon Martin case has become an international topic. A young African American man was shot while walking through a gated community with his hood up. The neighborhood watchman, George Zimmerman, believed that Martin was acting suspiciously. He called 9-1-1 and followed Martin. They had an altercation, and Zimmerman shot him in self-defense. This is Zimmerman's side of the story. Unfortunately, this shot was fatal. We'll never know Martin's side of the story. However, we do know that he was walking to his father's fiancée's house, which was in that gated community. He was also carrying only an Arizona Tea and Skittles. There has been a lot of controversy over this tragedy due to Florida's Stand Your Ground law, which states that Zimmerman was within his right to shoot Martin, if he truly felt threatened. When Zimmerman called the police they told him to not follow the suspect; they would be there soon to handle the situation. Yet, he chose not to follow those orders and now a 17-year old is dead. Zimmerman has not been charged for anything, even though the police tried. If only we knew Trayvon's side of the story.

This relates to the Rwandan genocide because it can show how there is unequal application of the law. If the roles had been switched, and Martin had shot Zimmerman, he probably would have been arrested. This didn't happen, though. In Rwanda, the Hutus were not punished for killing Tutsis, they were actually rewarded. Yet, if a Tutsi tried to retaliate, they were basically sentenced to death. This unequal application of the law can be very dangerous.