

*Guest*  
**VIEW**

# Out in a flash

## *Close friend's death sparks disbelief, outrage*

SAN JOSE, Calif. (U-WIRE) — Living in the ghetto, my life is constantly touched by violence. It's at the point where I don't even bat an eye at the sound of sirens blaring. I just pray to God that no one I know and care about has been hurt and then go about my business.

On Jan. 16, my luck ran out. I opened the newspaper and was confronted by the headline "Richmond man found dead." The 6-inch story was about a former classmate and friend who had been found dead in the street, his body riddled with bullets.

At the sight of his name, my body went numb. I immediately thought back to Sept. 25 when another Contra Costa College student was shot and killed. In broad daylight, three gunmen drove onto the San Pablo campus and emptied their semiautomatic weapons into the 20-year-old body of Christopher Robinson while he waited between classes.

I read the article about my friend's death about 50 times that day — the reality of him being gone just wouldn't sink in. I remembered Robinson's mother telling me that she heard noises at night and

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thought that it was her son, who she knew in her heart and mind was dead.

The fog that had enveloped me was replaced by sheer outrage.

How many more tears will black women have to shed before black men get their acts together? According to the National Center for Health Statistics black males between the ages of 15 and 24 were killed by guns at the rate of 179 per 100,000. “If the rest of the American population was being killed at the same rate as that of young black men, more than 460,000 people would die of gunshots each year.”

Why is this happening? Because thousands of young black men have been miseducated. They have been led to believe that a man's worth is measured by the amount of drugs he sells or the caliber of gun he carries. These are the same young men who say they want respect or props as they're called in my neighborhood. These are the same young men seen on the nightly news outlined in chalk.

Where is the honor in having some television reporter standing over your dead body saying, “And now to Sal Castinada with traffic” or

a headline that reads, “Streets claim two more?” When I die, I want people to say “Genoa Barrow made a difference.” If at the time of my death, the only thing people can say is that I died, then I failed to make use of my time on earth.

Many young black men are doing just that — wasting time. They're slanging and banging and expecting people to be impressed. All the posturing is a waste of time if no one acknowledges your existence until it's erased.

My friend Lee was charming and talented, but you couldn't tell by the article that appeared in the paper. One could blame it on the reporter, for only focusing on the negative and not including any facts about his life. That would be easy. But Lee, even in death, must take responsibility for the choices he made in life. And so must the hundreds of others determined to live the “thug life.”

Black men are always complaining that no one respects them. I say it's about time they start respecting themselves and those they will ultimately leave behind.

— Genoa Barrow  
*The Spartan Daily*

*Guest*  
**VIEW**

# Falling in a big way

## *Potential for destruction of Earth is out there*

COLLEGE STATION, Texas (U-WIRE) — Considering the Earth's impending doom, grades aren't crucial.

Kaboom! In the time it took to read that word, Earth could be blown out of the Milky Way by an asteroid.

No human will ever comprehend the immensity and complexity of the universe. Grasping the fact that the human race could end in a matter of years is only the beginning of a thought process that could lead humans to think on a higher level. Whether fretting over a problem with school, work or a relationship, humans need to learn a little humility.

About 65 million years ago, an asteroid hit Earth near the Yucatan peninsula, a collision that wiped out the dinosaurs according to some scientists.

Human life is so trivial when thought of in cosmic terms. In a matter of minutes, the human race could be vaporized; everything our species has worked for or developed would be gone.

Scientists predict an asteroid, a much larger form of cosmic debris, will hit Earth every 250,000 years or so.

However, meteorites enter the Earth's atmosphere every day. Most are traveling so fast they burn up before impact. But cosmic debris some scientists would consider “small” could easily wipeout the Texas A&M campus.

John Connolly, a scientist at the NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston, said the chance of humans being affected by cosmic debris is rather high.

“The chances of (the earth) being hit by an asteroid are better than (a person) being in a car accident,”



AARON STECKELBERG/DN

Connolly said.

In 1994, astronomers had the first opportunity in scientific history to predict the collision of an asteroid with a planet in our solar system.

Fourteen months before it was forecast to hit Jupiter, the largest planet in the solar system, astronomers around the world began preparing for the event. As the meteor closed in on the planet, tension rose. But before impact, the meteor broke into several smaller pieces.

From Earth, the collision of the first and largest meteorite with Jupiter appeared to be a relatively small explosion — like the size of a mosquito bite on one's back. In reality though, the collision created

an explosion the size of Earth, and the fires it ignited burned for more than a year.

Obviously, the human race would be history if an asteroid that size hit Earth. Cosmic collisions occur as planets' orbits around the sun coincide with those of asteroids.

Therefore, the laws of probability and chance will ultimately lead to disaster. The severity of the disaster depends on the size of the asteroid, which can range from a fraction of a mile wide to several miles wide.

To calculate the austerity of an asteroid colliding with Earth, one multiplies one-half the mass of the object times the square of its velocity.

Dr. Duwayne Anderson, a

professor of geology, said a major collision would create a reaction unlike any human has ever seen.

“(Asteroids) are traveling several thousand miles an hour,” Anderson said. “Detonating all nuclear weapons on the planet at the same time would not equal the energy of one of these large asteroids hitting the Earth.”

If an asteroid hit the Earth, it would likely penetrate the upper crust of the surface and bury itself several miles deep in the lithosphere causing an explosion. The explosion caused by the impact would project debris for hundreds of miles.

A cloud of dust and soot would fill the air, blocking the sun's rays for several years. If the impact itself did not kill everything, the deprivation of sunlight could wipe out all other living things.

However, not all cosmic debris that falls to Earth is damaging.

This year, for example, NASA scientist Dr. David McKay found evidence of ancient bacteria on a meteorite from Mars. Attempts have been made to create some sort of device that could throw an asteroid off course, but not even the most powerful weapons in the United States' arsenal could prevent a massive rock from hitting the Earth.

The cost of building something capable of such a challenge would bankrupt even the richest country.

We are alive for only a fraction of the time it takes for a world to be created or destroyed. It is vital to the well-being of society that humans learn to look at things on a larger scale.

That will help ease even the deepest pains.

— Brandon Hausonfluck  
*The Battalion (Texas A&M U.)*