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Biology 1090 – Sp17

Signature Assignment

News Analysis Reflection

After reading several articles, I chose to write my first news analysis on one I felt was more interesting, relatable, and easy to understand. The article titled *“The Rational Choices of Crack Addicts”* by John Tierney definitely changed the way I think about science in some aspects. Since a child, I have had a love hate relationship with science. I never thought it could relate to my life outside of the way our bodies function and the memorization of difficult terms and functions. Throughout the article and film, I was surprised to notice scientists level of advocacy and actively engaging in public policy debates, especially against laws and president’s decisions.

There were various connections to business, government, politics, economics, and humanities. As it discussed the struggles of not only crack addicts, but also the environments they live in and the obstacles they face on a regular basis. Not all users become an addict after trying a drug. Their surroundings have a large impact on their decision to continue to turn to drugs such as unemployment, homelessness, emotional and physical disabilities, and relationships. In the documentary related to this article- Mark W. Bennett, a Senior United States District Judge of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Iowa, discussed how he has imprisoned many African American men for minor drug crimes. Most of

these men turned to the distribution and use of drugs when unemployment was an issue and they needed to provide for their families. He continued, "Once these men are convicted of a drug crime, their chances of getting a job or grant to attend school after release, are automatically denied so they return to the streets and continue to make a means, and then the judicial system is like a revolving door" (Jarecki 2013). He also discussed over the many years he has been a judge, he has seen that this tough system America is implementing on the drug world has not worked and has caused America so much money but we keep investing into it and it only gets worse. He too believes that America needs to make a change toward treatment rather than imprisonment, but our government and president today, seem to disagree. The reason I decided to include this portion is that it included all of the connections to business, government, politics, economics, and humanities. Especially the fact that these laws identify racially. The film also revealed, "African American's do not use crack cocaine any more than whites, in fact, whites use it more" (Jarecki 2013). Although society had identified African Americans and Hispanics as the drug traffickers and users, we are still imprisoned more than whites. It continued with data, "African Americans make up 13% of the population and are 13% of the crack users. In other words, the rest of the users are white and brown. Which is kind of amazing because 90% of the crack cocaine defendants in the federal system are African Americans" (Jarecki 2013). This is a perfect example of how America's drug war is implementing Johnathan Kaufman's chain of destruction and further supports Dr. Carl Hart's research studies in "The Rational Choices of Crack Addicts."

Honestly, I have taken Human Biology a few times. This was my third attempt. Many of the reasons I did not complete the course involved my personal life. As I too am a statistic, the

film and article discuss. I come from Marlboro Project Houses in Brooklyn, New York where I live with my crack addicted mother who was never home and I took care of myself or hung out in the streets where I saw prostitution, drugs being used and sold, violence, homelessness, dead bodies, etc. Yet, here I am today, attending college and fighting against all odds as my childhood still follows me day-to-day. I want to be someone who came out of it, to return to it and make a difference by helping my people. This is why I chose to pursue social work, but I never understood why one of the pre-requisites is Human Biology until I completed this assignment. Science is part of everything, whether it can be seen or not. As a child, I always wondered why my mother chose drugs over her children. I never sat back and thought about the deeper connections going on in her brain and body because I did not understand. Science is unbelievable and I appreciate its ability to help us better understand our environment and ourselves.