

## Materialism leads to early life crisis

(U-WIRE) — You may have heard of or witnessed the midlife crisis of countless forty-somethings, but I'll bet you haven't heard about the new trend in nervous breakdowns that may await you in your immediate post-college years: the "quarterlife crisis."

Despite the slogans you hear from professors and CNN about "economic opportunities" and "living in the best of times," many young adults fresh out of college are hitting one of the most depressing moments of their lives at earlier ages.

A June 25 *New York Times* article titled "Is This the Face of a Midlife Crisis?" explores the lives of many individuals in their late 20s to early 30s. These people graduated from Ivy League schools and established themselves as successful citizens and major players in the global corporate market with six-digit salaries.

Yet as the article points out, many of these successful people are beginning to question the direction of their lives and even the point of their existence. It describes what people are now calling the "quarterlife crisis."

The quarterlife crisis is basically a midlife crisis experienced at an early age like 28. Usually, when people think of the midlife crisis, the "American Beauty" image of a sedated Kevin Spacey sitting in his jail cell-like cubicle at work or a frantic Annette Benning breaking down because she failed to make a real-estate sale may immediately come to mind.

But hardly anyone expects to find themselves faced with the prospect of an unfulfilling life at what is supposed to be the crux of their "good-timing" 20s.

What can explain such a contradiction? While there is probably more than one answer to this question, I believe that the structure of university life and society's expectations of young adults help to set the conditions for the quarterlife crisis. The money-driven mentality that pervades institutions of higher learning — especially prestigious ones — diverts people's attention from reflecting upon their own lives and asking the fundamental question, "Am I happy?"

From the beginning of grade school, many of us have been expected to strive for the best grades and participate in the most extracurricular activities so that we can build up our resume to get into the top colleges.

Afterward, once we are admitted into a world-renowned university, we are uncritically taught to work toward law school, medical school, business school or to get hired by a major firm or company where we can make lots of money, settle down in a suburb and have 1.2 kids.

But amid all of this drive to succeed and this blind ambition, we may find ourselves without the time to stop and really ask whether or not we feel fulfilled. Consequently, the conflicts that are avoided during college re-emerge once more.

Yet what can explain the fact that the nervous breakdown takes place at an earlier age than the midlife crisis? This can again be attributed to the unique time that we

find ourselves in. The expectation that we follow the standard path of "success" is a lot stronger than ever.

Our society's paragons of virtue are not human and civil rights fighters like A. Philip Randolph, Philip Vera Cruz or Dolores Huerta, but corporate leaders like Bill Gates and Steve Jobs.

Everyday, people pay financial worship to multinational corporations such as Wal-Mart, McDonald's and Nike.

Many of us have been socialized to dream that we may one day hold positions of financial power that expand beyond U.S. borders. The dream of becoming corporate giants with multiple investments, four different houses, a yacht and a Ferrari F355 has never been stronger.

I believe that Beyonce Knowles of Destiny's Child said it best in an MTV interview, "I'm young, I want a certain amount of money and by the time I'm 30, I don't want to work." With popular stars making such statements, it is no wonder that children learn to pursue individual monetary interests at early ages.

The pressure and the expectation to become financially well-off has led students to pursue material and monetary satisfaction without developing any sense of critical understanding or compassion. A college education simply becomes a means to an end, rather than an end itself, where students question the realities they have been presented with and critically examine their own lives.

Like heartless robots, we are expected to program our future for the next 10 years and go about our day-to-day lives toward some goal that has been outlined for us. We become more and more alienated from our communities and even our classmates. Students no longer are people with their own unique experiences and personalities; instead, they too are only used as study buddies, or represent mere competition to be defeated.

It is this lack of human compassion and increased alienation that has helped to contribute to people's quarterlife crisis. In the search for the holy grail of fortune, we lose our ability to feel for others, especially those who have been oppressed. Without that compassion, our lives become devoid of love. The fact is that in our times of extreme individualism, the connection with our community gets broken and we end up forgetting to stop and appreciate the beauty that surrounds us.

Many of us, in our desire to "succeed," avoid conflict and select the easiest road where we'll meet the least resistance. But we must strive to not lose contact with that human compassion that provides us with comfort and fulfillment.

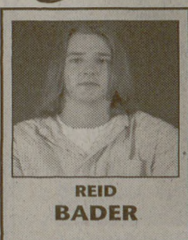
Otherwise, we will find ourselves becoming slaves to our own success. The cars, jewelry and mansions that we consume will end up consuming us. We will find ourselves in a quarterlife crisis going mad. Now is the best time to question yourself and your reality.

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Daily Bruin  
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## Big Brother is here

### Face recognition technology violates rights

The Tampa Bay City Council should be commended for revising its initial decision and making efforts to stop the implementation of face recognition technology (biometric identification cameras) in its city.



REID BADER

On May 10, the Tampa Bay City Council approved a system of 36 cameras to be mounted in the Ybor City entertainment district, which has as many as 150,000 visitors during a weekend. The cameras were set up free of charge by the Visionics Corporation as an example to other cities of what their FACEit technology is capable of to try to attract more business.

After the approval and implementation of the system, the council claims it had no

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idea of the outcry from the public against the use of the face recognition system.

The decision by the council to approve the project was based on some of the benefits that the system provides.

In the London borough of Newham, where the exact same system is in place, city officials associate the cameras with a decline in crime in the areas where they are installed. This has led officials in Iceland's Keflavik Airport to adopt the same technology. Similar recognition devices are used in casinos. They are used to spot cheaters and others who are consistently trying to beat the odds.

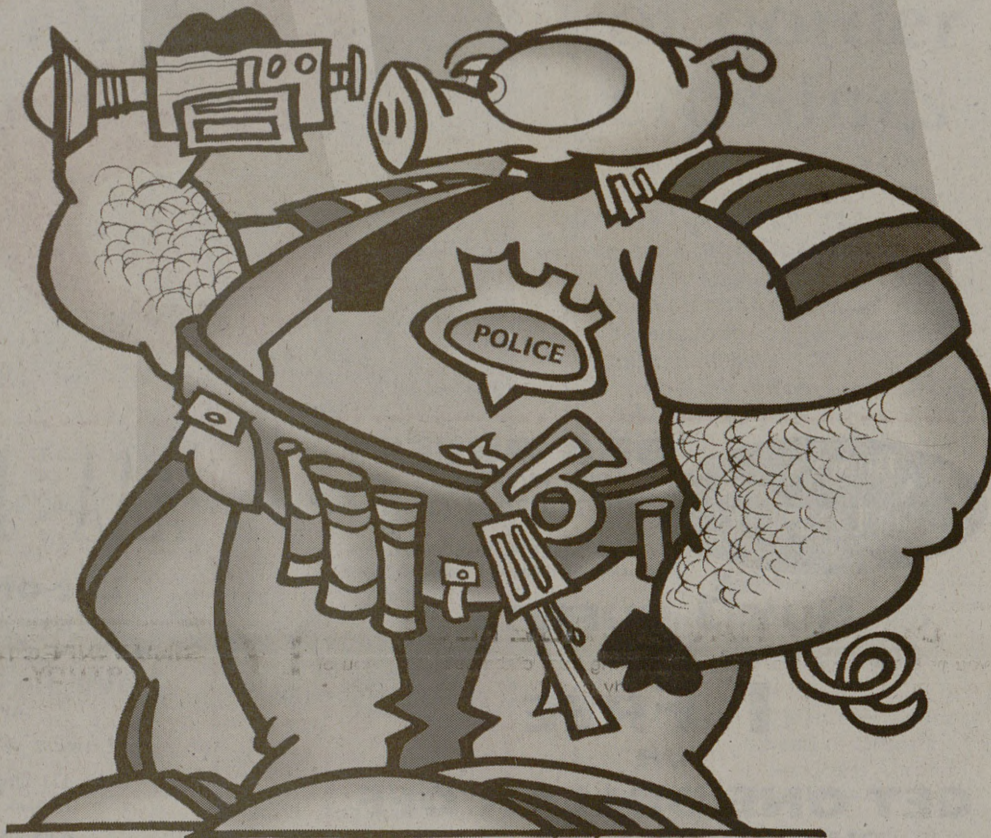
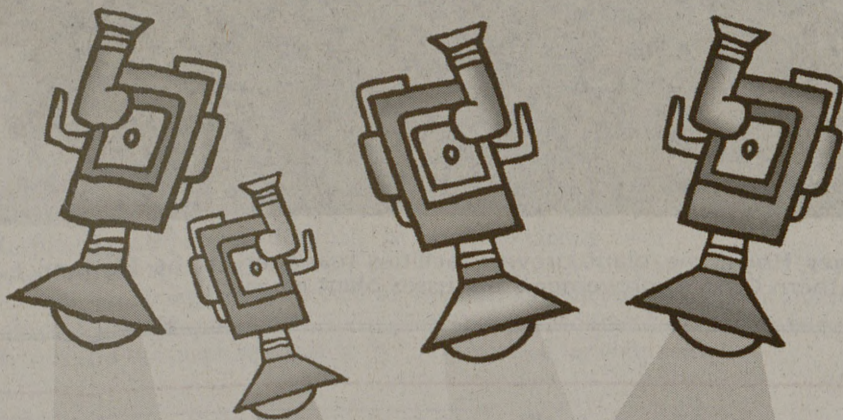
Furthermore, the system acts as a police officer on the street with about 30,000 pictures of people who are wanted by the Tampa Bay Police Department. This means that the city can essentially have a police officer on every corner looking for criminals 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In spite of possible advantages of the system, the members of the city council have demanded that there be another vote in order to terminate the contract with FACEit maker Visionics.

This decision mainly has come about because of the legal issues that would arise from implementing such a system in the United States. The major concern is that face identification technology use by the police violates the Fourth Amendment, which protects all citizens against unreasonable searches and seizures.

Oakland, Calif., considered using a similar type of surveillance technology in 1997, but after protests from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and on the advice of the city attorney, the city decided not to implement the system.

A similar type of technology made by



CHAD MALLAM/THE BATTALION

Graphco Technologies was used in Tampa Bay for Super Bowl XXXV. The system proved somewhat unsuccessful. Although it identified 19 offenders in the crowd of 72,920, none of them were apprehended because the large number of people attending and the architecture of the Raymond James Stadium made it difficult to locate the offenders.

There are also fears from the ACLU and other civil liberties groups that installing this technology in Ybor City will be a foot in the door for more intrusive technology that could result in George Orwell's Big Brother coming to life.

This is indeed possible, considering that in 1999 Illinois became the first state to enter all driver's license pictures into a database that will soon grow to over 20 million people. The combination of a database of every citizen and biometric

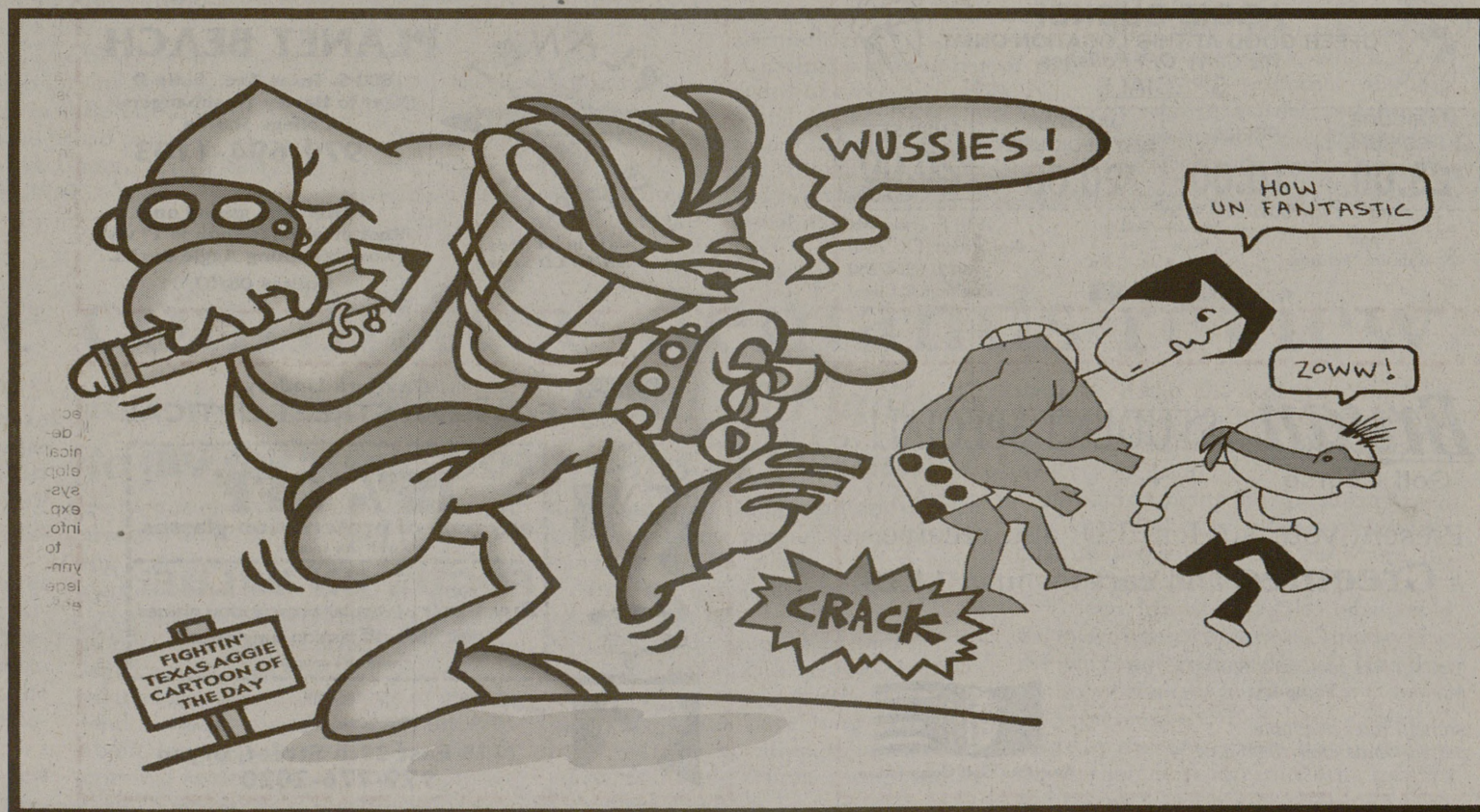
technology certainly brings Orwell's vision of the future closer to reality.

Those who do support police using such technology say that they do not mind being watched, because their safety against criminals is increased in the end. However, Benjamin Franklin said, "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

Using biometric technology to identify every person as a criminal or not is a violation of the basic rights the United States was built on. The decision of the Tampa Bay City Council to attempt to cancel the surveillance contract with Visionics is a sound one, and should be followed by other cities considering similar contracts.

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## CARTOON OF THE DAY



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