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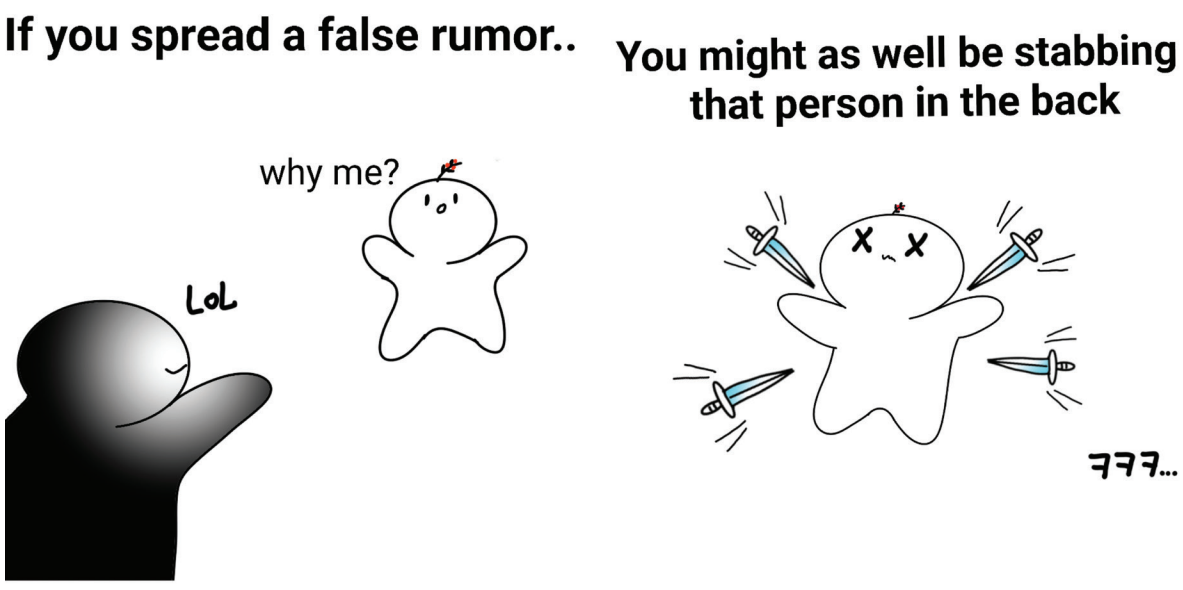
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COMIC BY DU GOHN LEE, CONTRIBUTOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Daily Opinion

'DIE HARD': CHRISTMAS MOVIE INCARNATE

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Some say it's not Christmas until they see snow. Others say it isn't Christmas until after Black Friday. I say it isn't Christmas until I see Hans Gruber get thrown off of Nakatomi Plaza and "Ho-ho-ho, now I have a machine gun" get written on a dead terrorist.

"Die Hard" is a Christmas movie, no matter what anyone says. I think that there are four rules that make a Christmas movie. One, the plot must be influenced by Christmas. Two, the words Merry Christmas, a reference to Christmas or another version of it must be said. Three, there must be Christmas decor or imagery within the movie. Fourth and finally, though this isn't a need, a Christmas song should accompany the soundtrack. So, let's break down "Die Hard" and how it meets all the rules.

The plot of "Die Hard" follows a New York cop, John McClane, flying to Los Angeles to be with his estranged wife Holly and their kids. Holly invites John to her office Christmas party at Nakatomi Plaza. During the party, terrorists seize the building and take hostages. That leads McClane to undertake saving his wife and her coworkers. From this timeline, you can clearly see that McClane, a dedicated member of the NYPD, was only in LA to be with his family at Christmas. It was not just a random whim or visit for McClane. This is also supported by the fact that he brought a stuffed bear as a present for his kids.

Merry Christmas, or a version of it, is said multiple times in the film. McClane says it to his limo driver, Argyle; Hans Gruber says, "It's Christmas, Theo, it's the time of miracles"; and Theo references "The Night before Christmas." All three times pay tribute to the fact that even though this is a "shoot 'em up" movie, it is still Christmas Eve. In the movie, both spoken and written, Christmas is mentioned a total of eighteen times, which beats out words such as "die," "hard," "shoot," and "kill." The movie must happen at Christmas because it wouldn't make sense to happen any other time. By referencing Christmas, the writers are stating that it is a Christmas movie.

The use of Christmas decor is important in a festive movie. In this, "Die Hard" prevails once more. There are about 19 Christmas trees in the film and 15 instances of Christmas decor. That number beats out Home Alone, which had just 7 Christmas trees. By this measure, if "Die Hard" isn't a Christmas movie, then that must mean Home Alone isn't either.

My rule about the use of Christmas music is a give or take, but don't worry, "Die Hard" has it. The movie's Christmas songs include "Christmas in Hollies," "Let it Snow," "Jingle Bells" and "Winter Wonderland." The character of Sgt. Al Powell hums the tune of Let it Snow as he is out on patrol before responding to Nakatomi Plaza. Another indicator is the song "Christmas in Hollies," which Argyle is listening to in the limo while the terrorists lock down the building. It's not the most traditional song, but it's still a Christmas one. If these songs don't make it a Christmas movie, then what will?

People arguing against the film being a Christmas movie often say that it was released in the summer and that it is too violent. Another film, that was released in the summer is the 1947 Christmas classic "Miracle on 34th Street." In response to the violence argument, Kevin from Home Alone would have killed the wet bandits with his traps, but since it's played up for jokes, people think that it's fine. Well, if a child defending his home is okay, why isn't a man protecting his wife any different? If Kevin can get away with it, so can McClane.

All in all, "Die Hard" proves itself to be Christmas enough. To some naysayers, Christmas enough isn't good enough. To that, I say, if 19 Christmas trees are not Christmas enough, then what is?

Just remember what the Christmas hero "Roy Rodgers" says to Hans Gruber before saving Christmas: "Yippee-ki-yay motherf***er!" If that isn't the holiday spirit, then I don't know what is.



Holly Gennaro played by Bonnie Bedelia and Hans Gruber played by Alan Rickman in a scene from the 1998 movie "Die Hard." There is still an ongoing debate on whether the movie should be considered a Christmas movie.

PHOTO COURTESY OF RETROBLASTING ON FACEBOOK

A BLUE WAVE ISN'T ENOUGH

by Dria Rybczyk
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Tomorrow, lines will form across the country as people wait to cast their ballots in the 2026 midterm elections. The majority are predicted to vote Democrat after two years of chaos and destruction by the Trump administration and his government trifecta. In particular, Democrats are predicted to gain a majority in the House of Representatives, while it's more of a toss-up as to whether they'll reach a majority in the Senate. Either way, with at least one part of the legislative branch free from the reins of Trump-affiliated Republicans, the dictatorial levels of unchecked power he's had since his re-election may be significantly hampered.

Even with government trifectas, Obama and Biden both failed to effectively combat Bush and Trump's right-wing strides. Obama failed to roll back Bush's authoritarian policies following the Sept. 11 attacks, including citizen surveillance, the War on Terror and the Department of Homeland Security's mistreatment of immigrants. This allowed Trump to massively expand ICE's ability to surveil, attack and detain any American they see fit. Biden signed the first federal anti-LGBTQ law in over 25 years in a bill with a provision that blocked healthcare for trans military children. This acceptance of transphobic legislation has since ballooned into many Democrats outwardly supporting anti-trans policies in 2026. Biden also focused on funding police departments as much as possible, fueling the ability for Trump to crack down on opposition protestors. Additionally, after Israel's occupation of the Gaza strip in 2023, Biden's administration and many Democrats chose to side with Israel rather than condemning the genocide it is still committing today with help from American weapons.

That isn't to say that you shouldn't vote for Democrats today — you absolutely should — but it does mean that we as a country cannot allow a Democratic win to lull us into the belief that everything will be alright. Just because Trump's power may be reduced doesn't mean we should become complacent and stop demanding real, proactive, progressive change. Without it, we'd just be kicking the can down the road until another ambitious Republican steps into Trump's shoes and we repeat the cycle all over again.

This major roadblock for the Democratic Party is only now starting to budge due to organized political efforts. There are multiple progressive democratic-socialists in Congress, including Bernie Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib. Zohran Mamdani, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, an advocacy organization, has an approval rating of around 69% as the mayor of New York. He's achieved this level of popularity because he has proven that it isn't difficult to push for and enact progressive policies once a progressive candidate is elected.

Voting booths set up on the second floor of the UConn Bookstore on Monday, Oct. 19, 2026. Registered voters can cast their ballots today.

PHOTO BY JACOB BLACKWELL, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

America has seen this kind of election many times in recent years. If Democrats win back the House, 2026 will continue a cycle that we've been seeing since the Obama administration. Obama began with a political trifecta in 2008 before Republicans won a majority in the Senate in 2010, which they kept for the rest of his administration, even winning control of the House in 2014. Then, Trump started with a trifecta before losing the House in 2018. Biden also began his term with a trifecta before losing the House in 2022.

Despite power flipping back and forth between parties, it seems as if only Republicans have actually made major political strides over the years. Liberal Democrats aren't running on bold new ideas to encourage voters, instead relying on the appeal of not being loyal to Trump, no matter how close their policies may be. Year after year we see Democrats taking up Republican talking points while Republicans shift further into extreme right-wing ideologies. Meanwhile Trump has

In this election cycle, several other democratic socialists are on the ballot under the Democratic Party at both the federal and local levels. These include DSA members Claire Valdez in New York, Chris Rabb in Pennsylvania and Donavan McKinny in Michigan. Additionally, Abdul El-Sayed in Michigan is running for a Senate seat on a confrontational and unapologetic progressive platform as an openly practicing Muslim.

These candidates prove that change within the Democratic Party is possible if we fight for it. In 2028, we can't settle for somebody like Gavin Newsom, one of many centrist Democrats who believe indulging in Republican ideas will get him more votes. Instead, we must make it known that candidates like Mamdani, Ocasio-Cortez and El-Sayed are the forefront of the Democratic Party by organizing protests, candidacy campaigns and garnering progressive communities.

Most importantly, we should believe that things can be better. We'll just have to work for it.