Essay Draft: The Chocolate War

# Introduction

Conflict is a common, unavoidable occurrence in life, watching 30 minutes of a news program confirms this with reports of corruption, crime and politics. Conflict is any disagreement minor or major between two parties, with groups and individuals deliberately creating conflict for their own gains. Generally most people back away from conflict, finding conformity easier and simpler than resisting a higher official or unofficial power. The consequences of conflict are easy to see, loss of friendship, defeat and disrespect are all common occurrences. Both texts studied display conflict, but in different forms that lack any form of similarity.

# Jerry’s Motives and Disturbing the Universe

When Jerry is told to refuse the chocolates by the vigils for ten days his natural response is to agree. However when Jerry continues to refuse to sell chocolates his downwards spiral from regular student, to a hated enemy of the teachers, vigils and general school starts to occur. When Jerry refuses to sell the chocolates he is unaware as to why he did so, his actions are bold and come from within. He is admired by the students for his bravery in resisting authority. The poster in Jerry’s locker acts as a beacon of hope, at first he is unaware of the importance and meaning of the words “Do I dare disturb the universe?” but over the course of the book he becomes attached to the poster, reminding him that others have been in similar positions to himself, this motivates him to continue on his path, even if it is a difficult journey he must take alone.

# Through Violence

Cormier is fond of the use of violence to illustrate his beliefs on conflict, this paints a very bleak outlook on Jerry the protagonist’s life. The extreme violence is clear and evident throughout the novel, from the start to the finish, Jerry is knocked around in football tryouts, assaulted by Janza and finally defeated in the boxing ring. Violence is also demonstrated in “Go back to where you came from”. There are also several threats of violence, Jerry receives many phone calls late at night, and one night the callers tell him they’re coming to get him.

# Through mental anguish

Cormier uses inner conflict to demonstrate Jerry’s struggles with his actions, finding it difficult to sleep at night. Not only is Jerry fighting a losing battle against the vigils and Brother Leon he is fighting against himself, he sits in bed late at night questioning his judgements, confused as to why he continues to refuse the chocolates. It is clear that the vigils are fans of mental conflict, Archie is perfectly comfortable ordering those who follow to ruin Jerry’s locker, deliberately ignore him and call his home telephone late at night, all of these actions have one purpose, to intimidate and enforce paranoia. There is no mental conflict in go back to where you came from, as the refugees are unaware there is a hatred directed to them from a select few, the Australians the refugees do interact with are sympathetic and are empathetic towards them.

# The motives of Leon and Archie

There is always a reason for conflict, one party attempts to gain something, in the chocolate war Brother Leon has borrowed a large sum of money from the school, to pay the school back he wants each student to sell twice as many chocolates at twice the price from years past. Leon is aware of the immense power both Archie and the vigils have over the students, and his intentions are for them to team up. Archie agrees to a deal between the two of them, the vigils will work together with Leon to help sell chocolates, Leon will get the money he needs to pay back the school and Archie will have even more power of the students.

# Back from where you came from

Go back to where you came form’s premise is simple, taking 6 Australians all with differing opinions on the Asylum seeker debate on a typical asylum seekers journey but in reverse. The Chocolate War and Go back to where you came from can be described as complete opposites. There is a distinct lack of similarity, which is evident throughout both. The Chocolate War is about the conflict between one student Jerry, a school gang and the acting principal Brother Leon.

## The Vigils and Brother Leon

Archie is the assigner of the vigils, he and Brother Leon; the acting principal, are the two sole creators of all the conflict in the chocolate war. . Like the vigils the media is the main creator of conflict in go back to where you came from, with news reports providing inaccurate information and creating conflict between the Australian public.