

Police disrupt class to arrest student

By Michiela Thuman

A UNL student was called out of her English class in Andrews Hall last week, and arrested for three parking violations she says were not hers.

The student, who wished to remain anonymous, said the police officers, two from the Lincoln Police Department and one from the University Police, stood outside the door of Andrews Hall 39 last Tuesday and motioned the teacher to come outside. The teacher, Maureen Honey, an assistant professor of English, said that when she went out, the police told her they wanted to speak with a student. Honey said because only five minutes were left in the class period, she asked the officers to wait outside. She then re-entered the classroom and after class quietly spoke to the student in question.

The student said she was then arrested for three parking violations from 1980, which were collected on a vehicle that she no longer owns. However, the student said she did not remove the old license plates before selling the car.

"I thought I was selling it for parts," the student said. "It wasn't even running when I sold it."

Honey was angry about the police action. "It was all quite a serious matter and she (the student) was very shaken up and taken off guard," Honey said. "I talked to her after the incident occurred. I'm quite outraged with what the police did."

Honey said she was angered because the police disrupted a class and embarrassed the student in front of her peers for such a "trivial matter" as parking tickets.

"I don't think the crime justified that type of action at all," Honey said.

The student said, "The policemen were very polite, yet I got the impression they were amused. It wasn't such an emergency that they couldn't have waited until I got home."

The student said she was lucky she had enough cash to pay her fines and court expenses, and fortunate that she could go before a judge immediately.

The student was taken before a judge immediately after her English class where she pleaded guilty to the parking charges. She said she did not plead innocent because she feared that it would be more costly to hire a lawyer in her defense than pay the more than \$75 in fines and court costs.

"It's just another example of buying one's way to justice," she said.

As far as the Lincoln Police Department is concerned, if the student's name was on the registration or the license plates were registered in her name, the vehicle is the student's responsibility. Is doesn't matter whether the vehicle is in that person's possession or not, according to a representative of the Lincoln Police Department who wished to remain nameless.

If there is a warrant out for a person the officer's only responsibility is to arrest that person and have him or her answer that warrant before a judge, he said.

"It was her responsibility to remove the plates and if she didn't we have no way of knowing if it (the vehicle) is still registered to her or not," the LPD officer said.

There is no proof that the arresting officers did not first attempt to contact the student at home before tracking her down at school, he said. He suggested that since the warrants were two years old the officers had probably tried to contact the student at home first.

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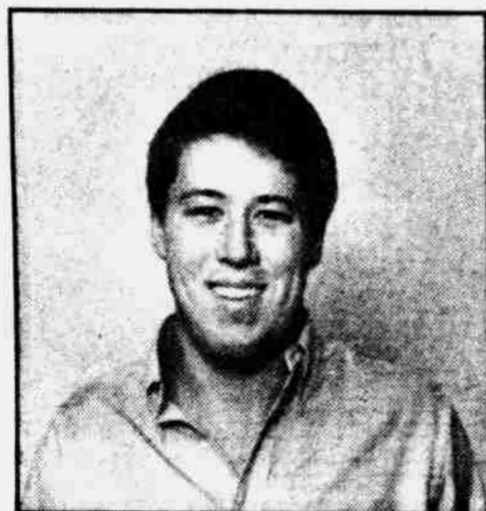
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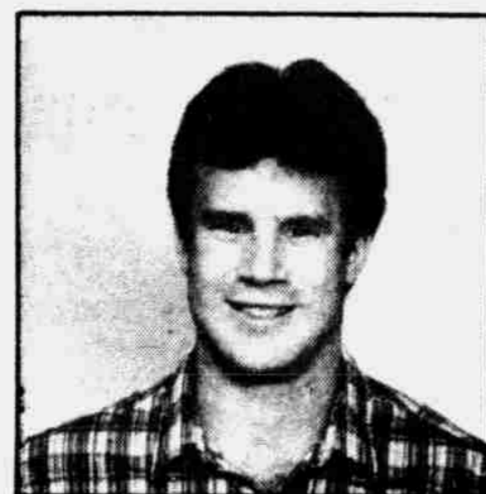
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