

Editorial

Flynt ad disregards journalistic integrity

I never saw the advertisement Larry Flynt ran that depicted Rev. Jerry Falwell as a wife-cheating atheist.

Nor do I necessarily agree with the methods and reasoning of the Rev. Falwell's heavy-handed evangelism.

For all of Falwell's crusading and moralizing, people should remember he is a man of God. The ideas he suggests may not be consistent with the modern method of life. But in my opinion, they are consistent with the Bible and the word of God. Believe it or not — without getting into a religious argument — the ideas in the Bible can lead to a satisfying life.

But for his stance on this and other subjects, Falwell has been the target of a rash of unwarranted personal attacks. Not critiques on his methodology mind you, but a series of venomous barbs from Johnny Carson jokes to the tasteless humor of Larry Flynt. Friday, a court in Los Angeles found that Flynt had not libeled Falwell in the phony

Hustler magazine advertisement. But the court did give Falwell a monetary compensation for personal distress in the thousands. It should have been more.

It's difficult to take Falwell's side given his elitist attitudes and measures.

But the real question here is the right of publishers to use their exclusive material to destroy or defame those of opposing opinions.

The court should not have considered only the body of the article and its weak disclaimer. The source of the advertisement dwells on the lowest common denominator for humor and for money. Even among the "skin" magazines, Hustler has a reputation of being cheap and low class. The intent of the article was no doubt to further sully the already shaky public image of Falwell. The ad was a blatant disregard of responsibility and journalistic integrity. It is the thing Hustler often cries when it has been attacked for demeaning and insulting photographs.



It would have been dangerous for the court to set precedent allowing all offended people to be eligible for retribution any time a publication makes fun of them. If that was the case, then comic

strips, such as Bloom County and Doonesbury, comedians and newspapers would be common targets. Being derisive on a subject cur- rently in the news is one thing. But using the medium to reduce

a foe to a laughing stock is another. Particularly when the people involved have antagonized each other in the past.

Ward W. Triplett III
Daily Nebraskan Senior Editor

'Da AMA wants to ban boxin' — I'll moida dem!'

Author's note: Because of an increasingly busy schedule, I've asked my cousin, Mario, from New York City, to sit in for me this week. I hope you'll find his perspective honest and refreshing. I'll be back next week. Mario?



James A. Fussell

Yea. So how's it goin' wit' you? I ain't doin so good, see? Last week afta my pal Vinnie caught a haymaker in da eighth round at the toidy-turd street gym, I decided ta grab a brew an g'wan home.

So I'm walking down toidy-turd street, right? And Mickey from the hot pretzel stand spits right in my path. So I asks Mickey if he wants to live to see his kids get old? So then Mickey tells me why he spits, and I spits, too. I guess the American Medical Association wants to ban boxin in the good ole' U.S. and A.

Ban boxin? Ya tryin' ta cut my heart out, or what? What am I gonna do on Sattaday aftanoons, go ta the ballet? Da noive o dem saw bones, where do they get off? Ain't they got no compassion for kids?

I mean, whatta about my kid, which I ain't got one, bein's I'm not married an all, but whatta bout him if I did? How's he gonna learn the manly art of self defense wit no fights on the tube? Nobody thought o dat, did they? Ten, 12 years o dis an ya got yaself a major crisis on ya hands. Everybody's kid's a sissy, an goin ta the ballet instead o woikin on his left jab. Pretty soon — zingo — a nation o nambypamby's.

It's enough ta make ya puke. I tell ya, de's AMA croaks, they ain't thinkin straight. What about the economics o boxin? The odder day I said ta Vinnie, I said, I says to Vinnie, "What has boxin done for ya's?" And even though Vinnie forgot da question, I know dat he bought his lovely mudder a new place in Newark. Whatta sweetheart.

Anyway, da point is, Vinnie used ta rob grocery stores. Now he's rollin in the long green an payin taxes to da feds like ya wouldn't believe. That's patriotic, ain't it? Good forda economy an all dat?

And who wants ta spoil all dis? The AMA, dat's who. Whatsa AMA know about boxin, anyway? Only time ya see one a dem's around ringside is when some slob's wearin his nose on his ear, or gotta busted eye joint, a tongue bit in half, or a brain dat's been bounced off da canvas too much. Hey, it happens.

So whattaya gonna do? Every year more slob's buy it in bathtubs than in a boxin ring. I can see it now — AMA votes ta outlaw bathtubs. Geez.

I say, whatta bout the public? Ain't da majority got no rights in dis country, or what? Ain't it writ somewhere dat we gotta right ta see a couple a mugs mash each odder up inna ring if dey wanna? Ain't it da American way?

I know my rights. I mean, I read, an like all that. So I asks my mouthpiece about it, an he says to me that witout a doubt — that's how he said it — witout a doubt, he

says, Americans have a constitutional right to free speech, free love and subsidized mayhem on Sattaday aftanoons. I think that means boxin's OK.

No matta what nobody says, a ban on boxin is unmanly an unnatural. An boxin don need no outside troublemakers like da AMA. Boxin takes care a its own, dat's for sure.

Why jus do odder day, I wuz askin Vinnie how Boom-boom's gettin along, bein's I heard Boom-boom's started bumpin inta buildings, and like that.

"Boom-boom don see none too good nomore," says Vinnie, "an I guess he's havin a hard time cuttin up his noodles."

"Know what I'm gonna do?" says Vinnie "I'm gonna give a testimonial for ole Boom-boom. Dem pugs inna middle-weight division will all open up Boom-boom. We could buy him a place in Newark — or he could live wit my mudder."

I swear, dat's what Vinnie said, real sincere, like. An da AMA wanta ta spoil all dis? I tell ya, it's downright unAmerican.

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Letters

Student questions use of Lied 'gift'

In response to the Dec. 11 letter to the editor: According to newspaper accounts, the Lied Foundation approached D.B. Varner, chairman of the NU Foundation board of directors, about donating \$10 million to UNL, and asked how it could best help the university. Varner, not spending the day in the library looking for non-existent publications, not waiting for hours for the computer to go back on-line to finish an assignment and not having to park miles from his office, chose a pet project that has been on the books since 1966, an arts center. The arts center was earmarked after the foundation spoke to Varner.

Proponents say the arts center will improve the quality of UNL's performing arts department. This is obviously a red-herring, considering that the Devaney Sports Center was supposed to improve our basketball program. Buildings are not more important than people. To improve quality, the personnel — not the buildings — must be enhanced.

The Lied Performing Arts Center has been excluded from hosting any rock 'n' roll concerts, which are popular with students. Traveling art

shows currently are hosted by Sheldon. In fact, such shows are so infrequent that Sheldon often uses the space to showcase graduate art displays.

Was the \$10 million really a gift? We have to match that \$10 million before we get a dime. A gift is given freely, with no conditions attached. If the Lied Foundation is truly more concerned with improving conditions at UNL, then it should give UNL the \$10 million, no strings attached and allow our ivory tower leaders to put the money where it can best serve the university as a whole.

The performing arts center would be fine if even half of these other conditions — high tuition and fees, parking, computer and engineering deficiencies, library and faculty funds — were corrected. The fact is, we can't just hope money will fall from the sky to solve these inadequacies. We need leadership in our administration that faces programs instead of trying to gloss them over by building a monument to themselves.

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