

Editorial

Domestic violence needs to be taken more seriously

A U.S. District Court jury in Hartford, Connecticut, may have set a legal precedent Tuesday for the treatment of domestic violence.

The jury awarded \$2.3 million to Tracey Thurman, saying 29 Torrington police officers violated her constitutional rights by failing to protect her from a stabbing and beating by her estranged husband.

Associated Press reported the case marked the first time a federal court agreed to hear the civil lawsuit of a battered wife. The jury also awarded \$300,000 to Thurman's 3-year-old son who witnessed the attack, for emotional damages. The 1983 attack left Thurman partially paralyzed.

Thurman had said police failed to give her complaints about her husband's harassment as much consideration as they would other types of complaints because her complaints stemmed from a domestic dispute.

The issue of whether domestic abuse should be treated the same as other crimes is as complex as it is controversial. "The Nebraskan" believes a crime committed in the home is still a crime and should be dealt with the same as other crimes. Arrests should be made.

However, there can be no blanket solutions to this problem. It must still be handled case by case. If police officers are assigned to protect a woman from her husband and nothing happens, they may be liable for a crime committed elsewhere if there wasn't enough police to prevent it.

Jo Ann Dunn, Domestic Violence Program Consultant for the Nebraska Department of Social Services, said police have thought that if they could calm a domestic dispute, no arrests need be made even though a crime may have been committed. She said police treated domestic dispute cases differently than other cases because they see a domestic dispute as a family issue.

"This (case) makes the statement that we'd better start treating this as any other crime," Dunn said. "I'm all for anything that says let's start treating this thing seriously."

Dunn said the case may have an effect on the treatment of domestic disputes because police departments may begin looking at their procedures to see if they would be liable in a similar case.

The domestic abuse problem is widespread and does exist in Nebraska. Dunn said the 23 domestic violence programs in Nebraska received a total of 12,915 calls from July 1984 to February 1985.

The Nebraska Legislature considered a bill in the last session that would make arrest mandatory in domestic violence cases where a crime has been committed. The measure was not passed. Sen. Shirley Marsh is still researching the issue. The bill should be presented and considered again.



Oh no, it's a station wagon!

Education fades 'unrealistic' dreams

The biggest shame about a college education is that it takes away most of our unrealistic dreams, and all we're left with are dreams of financial and career success. Along the way it's easy to lose much of our innocent ideals and naive expectations.

But then, I guess that's part of growing up, and anything's better than being stuck at age 15 the rest of your life. Remember the zits, the heartbreaks and the most important thing in your life? All those went away in a couple of years and people were saying you were just starting your life while you thought you had just finished the roughest part. Now you know better.



Bill Allen

As the last of those unrealistic dreams slip away you start to look into the future with an entirely different attitude. No longer is life one long party where you invited all the guests and the booze is all free.

No, lately I've even considered the scenario of getting a real job, settling down with my wife, having kids, living in the suburbs, buying a station wagon and fulfilling my part of the American dream. Considering, mind you, I haven't made up my mind for sure yet.

The scary part is that more and more the deciding factor is whether I would

choose that option for less than \$25,000 a year. It's scary partly because the figure used to be \$50,000 and mostly because it means giving up on a lot of dreams.

When people used to ask me what I wanted to do for a living I would always say, what do you mean, I'm already living? Then they would look at me funny and say, no I meant what do you want to do for a job. Then I'd say I wanted to live on the beach and write novels.

I still do, but dammit, that American dream keeps popping up in the back of my mind, and to think I used to puke at the very thought of a station wagon. Now I've figured it out to where my wife, Cindy, will drive the station wagon and I'll drive a four-wheel drive Ford truck, metallic black with silver trim and giant mud wheels so I can drive over cars when I'm leaving concerts. Now, if I could just talk Cindy into the station wagon.

I used to have several pretty silly dreams that no longer seem plausible, though I must admit life was much simpler when they were. I'm sure most people go through this, even if it were nothing more than when people used to ask you what you wanted to be when you grew up and the little boys wanted to be fireman and cowboys and the little girls wanted to be nurses or ballerinas. I wondered where they learned those role discriminations. It wasn't from me. I wanted to be the first male first lady in the White House. I mean, gee, she gets all the press and doesn't have to work.

My more pubescent dreams were pretty sensational really. As a matter of fact I still want to host the tonight show after Johnny Carson retires. And I could do it, too, and for one tenth the money. I've always wanted to be a professional comedian.

Ever since I can remember I've wanted to be a writer, and I could probably still make a living writing in some form or other, but it's not the same as what I had in mind. It's not the same as the desire I once had to make other people feel how I felt when I read all those Tarzan novels when I was a kid. It's not the same as making people feel the multitude of emotions and ideas in such short novels as the "Great Gatsby" and "The Old Man and the Sea."

Oh well, at least I've gotten rid of the really wild dreams. Since I've been married to my pretty little wife I've erased all those dreams about being stranded on a desert island with 20 Playmate centerfolds. Besides, a couple of my friends have been and they said it's not that big of a deal.

What really gets depressing sometimes is seeing all those people on T.V. who do seem to be living out their dreams. Like Carson, for instance, or Sylvester Stallone, or Geraldine Ferraro, or Mick Jagger.

But remember I haven't decided yet, and I've still got a year of school to go. Who knows, you might yet see me in the South Atlantic sailing with Jacques Cousteau on the Calypso.

I sure hope the boat has air conditioning.

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The Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board Tuesdays and Fridays during the summer. The Daily Nebraskan is published Monday through Friday during the spring and fall semesters.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Nebraskan by phoning 472-1763 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448. Second class postage paid at Lincoln, NE 68510.

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By Christopher Hamel

Editorial Columnist

There comes a time in every person's life when an experience has such magnitude that it escapes fair representation by ink and paper. This is mine.

I was standing on the crest of a bluff overlooking the Missouri River in Northern Cedar County and not 40 feet above me lay a golden eagle suspended in air. I was impressed with its size. It sported a wingspan not much less than my own, but I was also filled with a sense of pride.

It was not the symbolic pride that Americans are quick to associate with a bald eagle. It was a pride better described by the feeling one would have if Bob Dylan's car broke down outside your house and it was your phone he needed to use. It's a pride associated with rare experiences.

The rarity of this experience became two-fold, as did my pride, when another eagle glided over the top of the burr oak behind me and joined the first. Then came

a third and within seconds that oak tree gave birth to what I counted to be over 20 golden eagles. They hovered so close that I was continually positioned in the shadows they cast.

I soon realized that I was amid a rather grave situation. In an instant of emotional metamorphosis my pride turned to fear and I descended the bluff as quickly as possible.

I took to the sumac for cover and scampered from bush to bush in hopes of getting to my car which lie 1 1/2 miles away on Rattlesnake Road. Occasionally I would stand erect and scan the skies. I was a bit distraught to find that they were following me at an altitude less than the tops of the bluffs that surrounded me.

A half a mile later their pursuit ceased and with many over-the-shoulder glances I returned to my car. In retrospect I realized that the bluff on which I stood was a nesting area for the eagle's young and that I proposed a threat. Their actions were not arbitrary or unwarranted.

The magnitude with which I introduced this essay lies not in the rarity of seeing more than 20 golden eagles, nor does it lie in the unsettling experience of possibly being their prey. The magnitude has more to do with man's underestimation of nature's innate power.

Naively, we have begun to perceive the intelligence that distinguishes man from the rest of nature, and which has also taken us from the trees of Africa to the highrise apartments of New York City, as a power that has rendered us indestructible. Certainly, had I any of the weapons invented since the dawn of civilization, the eagle story would take on entirely different connotations. But I didn't. Like the eagle, all I had was myself, and in that light came a valuable insight into man's actual status in regards to nature. This insight suggests that in reality man is still as diminutive as he was when the first Homo sapien was forced to crawl under a bush to hide from the big bird in the sky. No more, no less.