

## Haunting pasts

Louisiana governor candidates 'running'

The news stories are so much the same. David Duke, "fringe" Republican candidate for governor in Louisiana, apologizes for his past and vows that he is a born-again Christian. His Democratic opponent, Edwin Edwards, carries much the same tune when asked about his own past deeds.

With just three days left before Louisiana voters will decide their new governor, much media attention has focused on the choice between Duke, a former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, and Edwards, a former three-term governor known to have a penchant for high-stakes gambling and womanizing.

When the pair debated Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press," they took turns explaining past actions.

Duke denied that he ever was a Nazi or called Adolf Hitler "a genius." He admitted to espousing racist attitudes in the past, but said: "I reject Nazism. I reject Communism. I believe in less government, and that's what I stand for."

Edwards denied that he participated in illegal gambling but admitted to gambling at casinos in Las Vegas and Atlantic City. When asked if he would try to change his wheeler-dealer, womanizing image if elected, Edwards said: "I'm 64 years old now, and I want this opportunity to do something for myself and for my state, and I'm not going to blow it..."

Who to believe?

According to The Associated Press, one of Duke's campaign workers said he no longer believes Duke. Bob Hawks, whom Duke identified as his state campaign coordinator at an Oct. 19 victory party, resigned this week, calling Duke a phony who had not renounced his racist past to become a born-again Christian.

Some reporters apparently don't believe Duke either. After Duke claimed to belong to an evangelical church that reporters couldn't locate, a group of reporters confronted Duke, who said the church was a small organization that met in private homes.

One black television reporter, Norman Robinson, was more adamant in asking Duke to give him something to believe:

"I am scared, sir," Robinson said during a televised debate. "I've heard you say that Jews deserve to be in the ash bin of history. I've heard you say that horses contributed more to the building of America than blacks did... Convince me, sir, and other minorities like me, why they should entrust their lives and the lives of their children to you."

Duke responded by asking Robinson if he ever had been intolerant to people unlike himself.

Duke's behavior goes beyond intolerance. It's hate — a dangerous commodity in politics.

Certainly, Duke is not the first racist politician in America. Racist overtones can be taken even from the Bush administration's catch-phrase "quota bill."

But David Duke has become a symbol of intolerance. Despite his insistence that he has left his racist past behind, Duke sold Nazi literature from his office in the Louisiana legislature as recently as 1989, and Hawks alleged that Duke used the term "niggers" after a Labor Day parade this year in Morgan City.

Even if Duke loses Saturday, he has won a strong following of citizens whose ideology is farther right than that of the mainstream Republican party.

Mainstream Republicans have been quick to distance themselves from Duke. Even President Bush said he'd vote for Edwards. With good reason.

But Duke's success in gaining that popularity that he has should be warning that ultra-right politics can no longer be dismissed as fringe.

While Edwards' ideology is far from shining and his position on women's rights may be downright frightening, he is no David Duke. Edwards is the lesser of two evils.

We hope that in Saturday's election Louisiana voters will decide that "not being David Duke" is enough.

—J.P.

## LETTER POLICY

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## REPUBLICAN TWINS SEPARATED AT BIRTH...?



CLARENCE THOMAS



DAVID DUKE

01-13-91 Nebraskan

## BUSH'S NEXT STOP - SINGAPORE

WALTER GHOLSON

## America hooked on politicians

Americans seem to be addicted to a powerful substance that causes us to act as if we have some mental illness. Most of us don't know it, and those of us who do won't admit it.

We walk around every day stoned on this dope, and when one of our worldwide neighbors says something about our problem, we say we can stop using it anytime we want because we're Americans.

Psychologists call this behavior the denial syndrome, which means that we have built an automatic defense mechanism against any suggestion that our problem has gotten out of hand.

In some cases our avoidance of the fact that our problem is visible causes us to ignore the reality of our situation and the danger posed by our habit.

While it seems as if I have been describing the classic drug abuser, in this instance what some of us are dependent on is not a drug or alcohol but our almost religious belief in some of the politicians we've voted into office over the past years.

We have become so strung out on their "vote for me and I'll set you free" rap that even when they are caught with our savings-and-loan money in their back pockets, we still sing the old denial song, "We can vote them out of office anytime we want to." But four years later they are still there.

We are hooked hopelessly on the addictive qualities of the political personalities who show up around election time to kiss babies and anything else that's held up for them.

And just like drug addicts and alcoholics, we deny that the politicians are out to get our votes so they can stay in office for another term. As long as they keep selling us the mind-altering drug of political rhetoric, we couldn't care less about what's happening to the economy or what country we bomb.

We weren't always political junkies. There was a time in America's history when people expected their leaders to represent them with honesty and integrity and to take their problems seriously. Back then, they knew how to control the people we put into office.

That was back in the good ol' days when we really believed there was a solution to every problem and all we had to do was call up Sen. What's-his-name's office and the problem would be taken care of.



**While we've been getting high inhaling the smoke left over from burning Kuwaiti oil wells, our cities are in decay and our children are buying automatic weapons to take to a public school system we can't find funds for.**

For years we actually trusted the politicians we elected and believed they represented our interests and were law-abiding citizens who swore on a brand new stack of Bibles to uphold the Constitution and to attend to the needs and desires of their constituents.

But then something happened to these salt-of-the-earth politicians that shook the foundations of government and cast doubt on the honesty of these political types, something that caused their eyes to widen, their minds to wander and their palms to itch.

In the bright lights of polite Washington society, they were introduced to the cartel called political action committees.

These PAC's showed Sen. What's-his-face how he could make more money than he'd ever seen if he could just manage to stay in office for the rest of his life.

They explained the importance of keeping the voters happy through good press relations and by keeping his private activities in the nation's capital from getting back to the folks in his home state.

The PAC syndicates showed him how easy it was to make lots of money on the lecture circuit and how to get free vacations in exotic places from

special-interest groups.

And just like all big-time drug operations, the PAC cartel has had a profound effect on the people in the senator's hometown. This special-influence-group drug has trickled everything down to the lower rungs of the political ladder, except the money.

So today, as we prepare to listen to another year full of mesmerizing orations from would-be elected officials, we must ask ourselves whether we really understand what they are saying when they tell us about all the great things they're going to do if they're re-elected in 1992.

We have to admit finally that we have become users of the same substances these politicians are on and decide to quit cold turkey. We've got to stop being afraid of the dealers of this political dope and realize that we cannot afford to be hooked anymore.

Because, while we've been getting high inhaling the smoke left over from burning Kuwaiti oil wells, our cities are in decay and our children are buying automatic weapons to take to a public school system we can't find funds for.

While we have been partying and chugging down the brew of perestroika, millions of our fellow citizens are unemployed and homeless.

While we've been hallucinating on this rhetorical acid and tripping out on a thousand points of light, our congressional representatives found it convenient to give themselves a healthy salary increase.

Instead of injecting ourselves with this political dope, we should try to find out why millions of Americans are lined up to get food stamps and why half of those who could vote don't.

It's way past time for us to wake up and smell the decaffeinated coffee and find the willpower to "just say no" to the new brand of political rhetoric.

Because those who traffic in the crack of political promises have again taken to the streets in your neighborhood with a new drug called conservative right-wing politics.

This stuff is extremely powerful; use it one time and you're hooked for life. The gang selling this new drug is an equal-opportunity employer. It just hired two new dealers: one is a black Supreme Court justice, the other a rehabilitated racist from Louisiana.

Gholson is a senior news-editorial journalism major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

BUS HAS ALL BEEN A HIGH TECH LYNCHING OF AN UPPITY BIGOT.