

'Love' hits airwaves, features UNL students

SPOTLIGHT

By Anne Steyer
Senior Reporter

Lamonte Pfaff is looking for love in Lincoln—specifically on the UNL campus.

Pfaff, 25, produces "Love on Campus," a new public access show that deals with issues in relationships at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The show airs Wednesdays at 10 p.m. on Cablevision Channel 14 and is broadcast in association with Nebraska Public Access Television. Pfaff said he was planning on airing new episodes every other week.

Pfaff, an unclassified graduate student from Omaha, said he hoped "Love on Campus" would help get him into film school at the University of Southern California.

For that reason, he does a great deal of the work himself, he said. He runs the camera and does the editing, although he has recruited a small crew to work with him.

Pfaff said he planned to produce eight shows to run through Jan. 31.

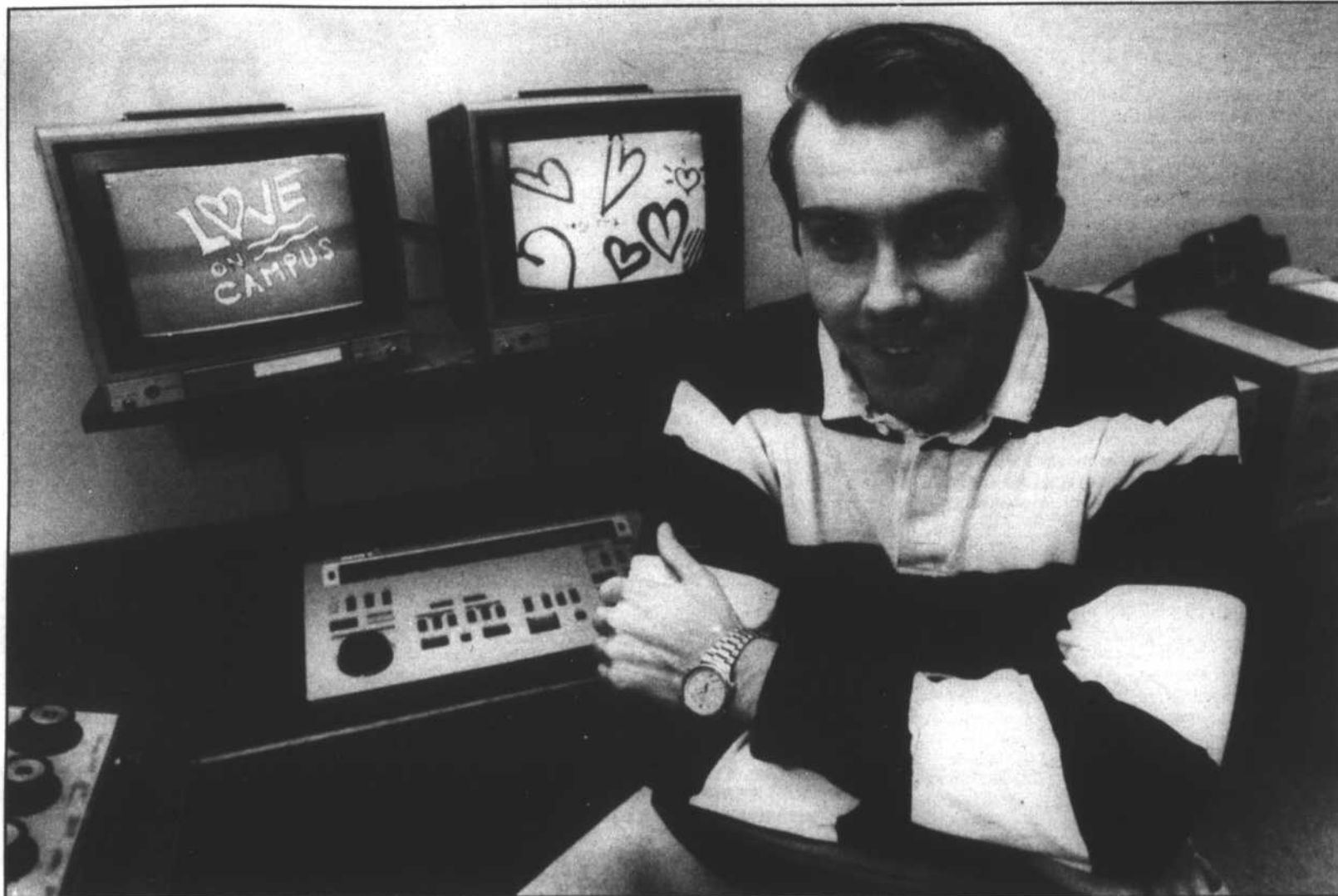
In terms of interviewees, Pfaff said he looked for people who seemed to be outgoing and willing to talk.

"We walk up and say 'Hey would you like to be on TV?'" Pfaff said.

Each show will have a different theme, but they will all be related to love, he said. Each episode features students attempting to explain their attitudes on love, men and women.

The topic of the first show was "What is love?"

Upcoming shows, he said, will concentrate on how students in the residence halls and the Greek community view relationships.



Staci McKee/DN

Lamonte Pfaff produces the show, "Love on Campus," which airs on public access television, channel 14. The show is on every other Wednesday at 10 p.m.

But that doesn't mean "Love on Campus" can't branch out to cover controversial campus issues, Pfaff said.

He said he hoped to incorporate the issues of the Barney love/hate relationship and the pink triangle stickers into future shows.

The commentary, he said, "is real impromptu, real spontaneous."

Students who are interviewed are told to use fake names, both to protect

themselves and to add to the fun.

He said he approached many students and found the bulk for his first program by Broyhill Fountain.

A lot of people turn down the opportunity to appear on camera, he

said, while others who agree sometimes clam up when the red light goes on.

Others, Pfaff said, get excited when they hear the subject matter, and are more than willing to talk.

'Strange Angels' reveals Midwestern reality, depth



"Strange Angels"
Jonis Agee
Ticknor and Fields

People on the East and West coasts have a stereotypical image of Midwesterners—to them, we are all just simple farmers.

Nebraska author Jonis Agee has written several books in Midwestern settings—in an effort to shatter the misconceptions of the Midwest.

Her first novel, "Sweet Eyes," deals with small-town life in Iowa and was named "Notable Book of the Year" by the New York Times.

"Strange Angels," Agee's second book, shows the complexities of Nebraska life at the rural level.

Set in the Sandhills, the novel attempts to show others that Nebraskans live a life reflective of the world outside the Midwest. She shows that Nebraska is really much more than just cornfields and Interstate 80.

Agee chose the Sandhills as her book's setting because the area was always an amazing, secret place to her when she was growing up just outside of Omaha.

"My father and brothers went to the Sandhills to hunt when I was a child," Agee said in a phone interview.

"The Sandhills have always existed in my imagination and recently in reality," she said.

Agee spent two years doing research in the Sandhills, traveling back and forth from her home in St. Paul, Minn. She talked to residents and even bought a stretch of land south of Valentine, very near the fictional setting of her novel.

The book deals with three siblings; each with mixed feelings toward the

others. They are forced to work together when their father dies and leaves his ranch to them.

Arthur, the eldest, is a money-hungry businessman who tries to expand the ranch and increase his investments at any cost.

"Arthur tries to slip into the stereotype of the bad man," Agee said. "But he is capable of moments of goodness and feelings."

Cody, his half-brother, is a quiet man who knows the basics of ranch life. His silence stems from a childhood raised by a single mother.

This segment details his need for silence:

"... His mother had taught him how words fail, how language was a lie. He was plenty happy for silence when he ran from their house, sometimes flattening his hands over his ears to stop even the crowding of frogs, crickets, grasshoppers, wind, and birds that threatened him."

Their half-sister Kya is wild and rebellious, with an inner toughness that makes even her brothers a little afraid of her.

Cody says "she was like keeping a pet rattler. Sooner or later you were going to get bit, so you couldn't very well blame the snake."

The three are each tested as human beings, Agee said.

"They have to go beyond their histories and the roles that are set for them."

Agee said the characters' dead father, Heywood, is based on her own father.

Like Heywood, her father gave his children roles, which he expected them to fill.

"I was the smart one. I went to a different school growing up. One of my sisters was the athletic one. We all had assigned roles," she said.

Writing about Heywood and his three children helped Agee to demystify her image of her father, she said.

Agee moves beyond personal issues in the novel, as well. She deals with the stories of several Native American Lakotas.

"I've always been interested in Native life and religion," she said.

Agee received assistance from a friend who is a teacher on the Rosebud Reservation.

In the book, Joseph, a Native American friend of Cody and Kya, attempts to come to grips with his heritage and religion.

He is a very wise but cynical man. Here he tells Cody how the image of the Native American changed during his lifetime.

"Growing up, I was 'Tonto.' In the army, 'Nam, I was 'Tonto.' I get home, we're suddenly 'the people,' hippies trying to move on the res, buying beads, running around in moccasins and loincloths. If it hadn't been so pathetic, it would've been funny."

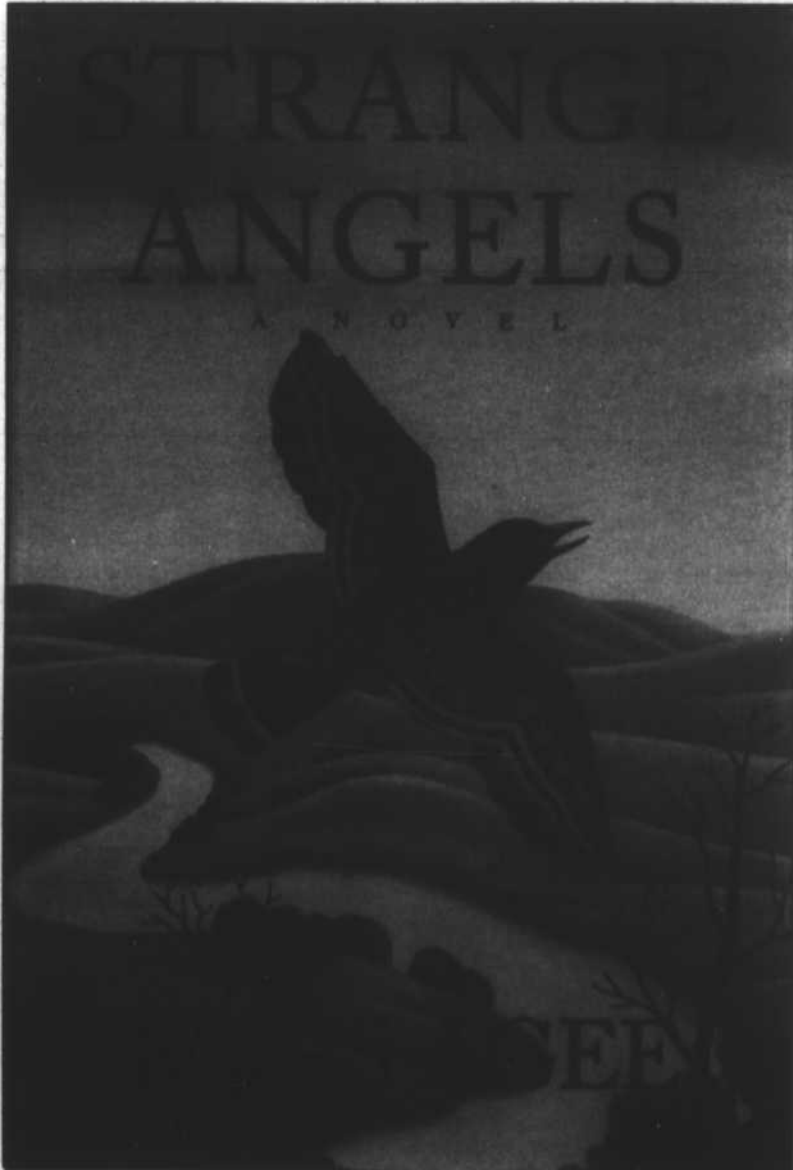
Joseph and Kya have a very personal relationship—and in the end—he helps her come to grips with herself.

Agee gives a very realistic picture of life in the Sandhills, with a good mixture of tragedy and humor.

Not many authors have the ability to graphically describe the castration of a bull. She does. Ranch life is more than just the romantic stereotype of the cowboy, as she shows in her description of a cattle "operation."

"When the door on the top dropped open, exposing the genitals, Cody pulled the sacs toward him and cut them off with one deft stroke. Without looking, he tossed them in the cardboard box behind him on the ground, where the flies quickly covered them. 'That'll put your mind on grass, not ass.'"

Well-written and balanced, the book has something for every type of reader. Filled with action, brimming with romance and topped off with realism and drama, the novel is a very powerful work that should be read,



Courtesy Ticknor & Fields

especially by Nebraskans.

Agee deals with the potential for kind, generous and courageous acts that lies within all of us. Coming out at odd moments, this is what makes us "Strange Angels."

Agee will visit Nebraska Bookstore, 1300 Q St., Saturday. She will answer questions and sign autographs from 1 to 2 p.m.

—Joel Strauch