

RAINBOW ROWELL

Movie renews faith in career

Denzel Washington made me a very happy girl last night. I spent a whopping \$1.50 to view "The Pelican Brief." The movie itself was okay. It was no "Buffy the Vampire Slayer."

Luckily, I'm not an unbalanced John Grisham fanatic, so I didn't leave the movie sneering and sputtering. "Omigod, the book was so much better."

I like pelicans and Julia Roberts (when she isn't glorifying prostitution), the plot was sort of exciting, and someone else paid for my popcorn, but none of these things were what made my \$1.50 worth every penny.

The absolute highlight of the evening for me was Denzel Washington. First of all—shivermetimbers—he's Denzel Washington. But more importantly, he reaffirmed my career plans.

Washington played a good-guy reporter who saved Roberts' character from the rest of the world and uncovered a plot behind the assassination of two Supreme Court justices.

I've wanted to be a journalist for a long time. Looking back, I didn't have much of a choice. I was always pleasantly pudgy growing up, so when I was looking for a role model, all I could find was Natalie from "The Facts of Life." Natalie edited Eastland's student newspaper, and she was going places fast.

When I was in high school, I followed suit. I was the best little high school journalist this side of the Atlantic. Move over, Andrea Zuckerman.

I fantasized about the days when I'd become a real reporter — when I could wear a cool fedora with a press card stuck in the band and say things like "Can I get that on the record?"

I learned to love the gritty, inky smell of newsprint. Every night, I fell asleep with the First Amendment dancing in my head.

Journalism seemed exciting and



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heroic. Journalists were watchdogs for the American people. They were quality control, champions of the people. They had integrity. They were idealists.

And if I became a journalist, I'd be in good company. Superman was a journalist. So was Spider-Man, Mary Tyler Moore and the mom on "Growing Pains."

Sometime between Natalie and now, journalists stopped being the good guy. Sometime since Lou Grant, journalists became nosy, scandal-loving, yellow-bellied, stop-at-nothing-to-get-a-juicy-scoop, slimy, sleazy creeps.

By the time I was in college and a declared news-editorial major, journalists were part of the cultural elite. As a college freshman, working for paltry wages at the student newspaper, I didn't feel like part of any kind of elite.

And yet, when I told people that I wanted to be a reporter, they accused me of being part of an ultra-liberal elitist group, plotting to bring our nation to its knees.

I heard my friends saying that newspapers and reporters couldn't be trusted.

It was reporters who were responsible for bringing the nation news about Roseanne Barr's personal life and Michael Jackson's plastic surgery. Reporters plotted against George Bush. And TV reporter Murphy Brown

was tearing apart the family.

They made me ashamed. "Are you the Rainbow who writes for the DN?" No, not me, that must be some other Rainbow. I'm an engineering major — I love America.

So, sitting at the Starship 9 (wishing that I was in that cool theater with the glow-in-the-dark spaceship), Denzel Washington gave me hope.

He renewed my faith in my profession. Well, actually, I never thought reporters were sleazeballs, so I guess he renewed my faith in other people's faith in reporters.

He had his weaknesses, but he was still the hero. It was nice to see a reporter saving the day. It was nice to see a reporter being what I want to be — a good guy.

Of course, if I want to be like Washington, I have some work to do. First of all, I'll need to work out. If I'm going to be running from terrorists and fooling secret agents all the time, I'd better be in good shape.

I could probably be a snappier dresser, too.

Maybe Washington's role made a few other people like reporters again, too. Who knows, maybe his latest role in "Philadelphia" will even make people like lawyers.

Rowell is a senior news-editorial, advertising and English major and the Daily Nebraskan opinion page editor.

E. HUGHES SHANKS

We've got catch phrase fever

Several weeks ago I heard a story on National Public Radio about a Massachusetts city council that denies access of some city services to families of those convicted of hate crimes in their community. I thought that was a great idea. But I also wondered, "What about other crimes like rape and murder?" Don't they deserve special attention, too?

"Hate crime" is a catch phrase for a crime against a person or group that is determined to be perpetrated because the victims are from a particular group.

We tend to use catch phrases a lot, especially when we're bringing attention to less fortunate or persecuted peoples.

I believe special attention should be paid to these kinds of crimes. However, I fear that the duality with which we define them enables us to remain detached from these unpleasant things that make us feel uncomfortable.

These are often things we are guilty of ourselves but tend to blame others for. It's safer and easier to look at hate from a distance.

I suppose then, a rape is not a hate crime unless it is performed within certain parameters. For example, the rape of a black woman by a white supremacist may be considered a hate crime.

The rape of a white woman by a black man doesn't usually seem to meet the definition of hate crime. If the rapist was a Black Panther and the victim a Mormon, perhaps that would constitute a hate crime, but I doubt it.

Murder also would apparently not be a hate crime unless it met certain criteria. For example, the killing of a member of the Sierra Club by a member of the National Rifle Association might be considered a hate crime. But usually the term "hate crime" is needed to put focus on the crimes against racial or ethnic groups (not upper middle-class whites who are generally believed to make up the Sierra Club).

It seems silly, but it is necessary. We should pay special attention to crimes against specific groups.

It would be easier to call a spade a



Left-wing: white Democrat. Radical: left-wing black. Republican: white person. Southern Democrats: Southern whites who vote Republican or southern blacks who don't vote much.

spade and take the specialness out of any kind of hate. Why not just call all crimes against anyone hate crimes?

Why do we need catch phrases to help us address "complex social issues" in a country that is founded on one's right to social freedom?

Without catch phrases we would be blurting out controversial things, constantly offending all kinds of people.

We usually use catch phrases without even thinking where they come from. The originators don't come into question unless someone becomes offended. And then we blame the originators instead of ourselves for using them.

When someone uses a catch phrase we don't like, we point the finger at them and make them the cause of trouble. It's wrong to label some catch phrases as "bad" and others as "good." They're all bad.

Here are several catch phrases we commonly see and use, and what I think they really mean:

Mulatto: a person who is half black and half white. From the word "mule," because race-mixing was thought to produce sterile offspring. This one is of particular offense to me, considering that my mother is half black and half white.

Inner-city: lower-class black people. Ethnocentric: anything but British. Gender equity: sex-based inequity.

Nontraditional: things white people do. Alternative: things white people do with each other and with others.

Athletically inclined: black athlete. Prop 42: black athlete. Student athlete: athlete. Junior-college trans-

fer: black athlete.

Left-wing: white Democrat. Radical: left-wing black. Republican: white person. Southern Democrats: Southern whites who vote Republican or southern blacks who don't vote much.

Role model: what blacks and whites say black children need. Mentor: a white person. A black minister: a leader in the black community. Elected official: a leader in any community.

Rural: white. Poor Southern blacks: rural blacks. Urban: poor urban blacks. Black-on-black crime: urban crime. Crime: what most whites fear will get them and what most blacks are victims of. Ivy League: white people.

S&L: where white people put their money and other whites steal it. Reorganization: job layoffs.

Soft rock: white rock. Soul: soft black rock or hard white rock. Funk: Red Hot Chili Peppers. Funkadelic: backup band for Red Hot Chili Peppers. Spiritual: black Christian music. Christian music: white Christian music. Gospel: black Christian music.

Date rape: what white men do to their dates sometimes. Rape: what black men and white men do to women. Fatherless homes: what white people think of most black homes. Single parents: mostly white parents.

You may not agree with these interpretations. I didn't originate them. Unfortunately I have used many of them. If some of them make you uncomfortable, ask yourself why. Don't shoot the messenger.

Shanks is a graduate student and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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IMPORTANT DATES TO CONSIDER:

- April 1 Application deadline for priority consideration (5:00p.m.)
- April 5 Meeting, Nebraska Union Board, City Union, 5:00 p.m. (Organizations invited to present concerns to Board)
- April 12 Union Board Operations Committee presents its recommendations to the Board, City Union 5:00 p.m. (Organizations invited to attend)
- April 26 Final vote by Union Board concerning space allocations. City Union, 5:00 p.m.

Applications must be returned to Suite 220, City Union, by 5:00 Friday, April 1, 1994. Address any questions or concerns to Frank Kuhn, Assistant Director of Nebraska Unions, Room 220 Nebraska Union (472-2181). Applications for East Union may be turned in at the Office for Student Involvement, East Union, by the same deadline, 5:00 p.m. Friday, April 1, 1994.

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