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EDITORIAL

## You're out

Three strikes crime bill costly to nation

This summer, across America, judges will be calling "Three strikes, you're out." Unfortunately, these calls will be made in courtrooms, not out on baseball diamonds.

As part of a crime bill passed by Congress, criminals who are convicted of three violent or drug-related federal crimes will automatically be sentenced to life imprisonment.

Although this will prevent violent offenders from ending up on the streets crime after crime, it will also imprison people who commit lesser drug-related crimes.

Not only will this result in life sentences, it will also burden taxpayers. At the least, an inmate costs about \$20,000 to maintain. If a criminal commits his third strike by age 25, with a life expectancy of 35 years, he or she will cost taxpayers at the very least \$700,000.

In already crowded prisons, space and money should be reserved for individuals who represent a real threat to citizens if left on the streets.

This bill allows the legislative branch of government to usurp the power of the judicial branch. Judges can give more appropriate sentences by using digression with each individual case.

In California, where a similar law already exists, police have had problems enforcing it. Criminals who already have two strikes get desperate after committing a third crime. They have nothing to lose and, like cornered animals, they are more likely to become violent with police.

It's true that our nation needs to be tougher with violent criminals, but the "three strikes, you're out" law will not fix an already shaky system.

## Mixed legacy

Remember Nixon for resilience, mistakes

When Richard Nixon is buried tomorrow, America will say goodbye to one of the most influential politicians in the history of the country. Some people loved him, and some people hated him. But no one could ignore the influence Nixon had on the United States.

Unfortunately, the greatest influence Nixon had on the country was a negative one: Watergate. History will remember Nixon as the president who resigned from office in disgrace and lessened the trust Americans have in their leaders.

Watergate is not all Richard Nixon was, of course. He won great accomplishments in foreign and domestic policy. He deserves credit for his successes as well as his mistakes.

But even Nixon, forever coming back from defeat, cannot escape the legacy of Watergate. It would be a mistake for America to only remember him for that dark period. But it would also be a mistake for us to forget it.

Most students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln probably cannot remember Nixon's time as president. He is probably the first president we remember dying.

But his legacy still shapes the world we live in. People today trust government less and are more cynical about its intentions.

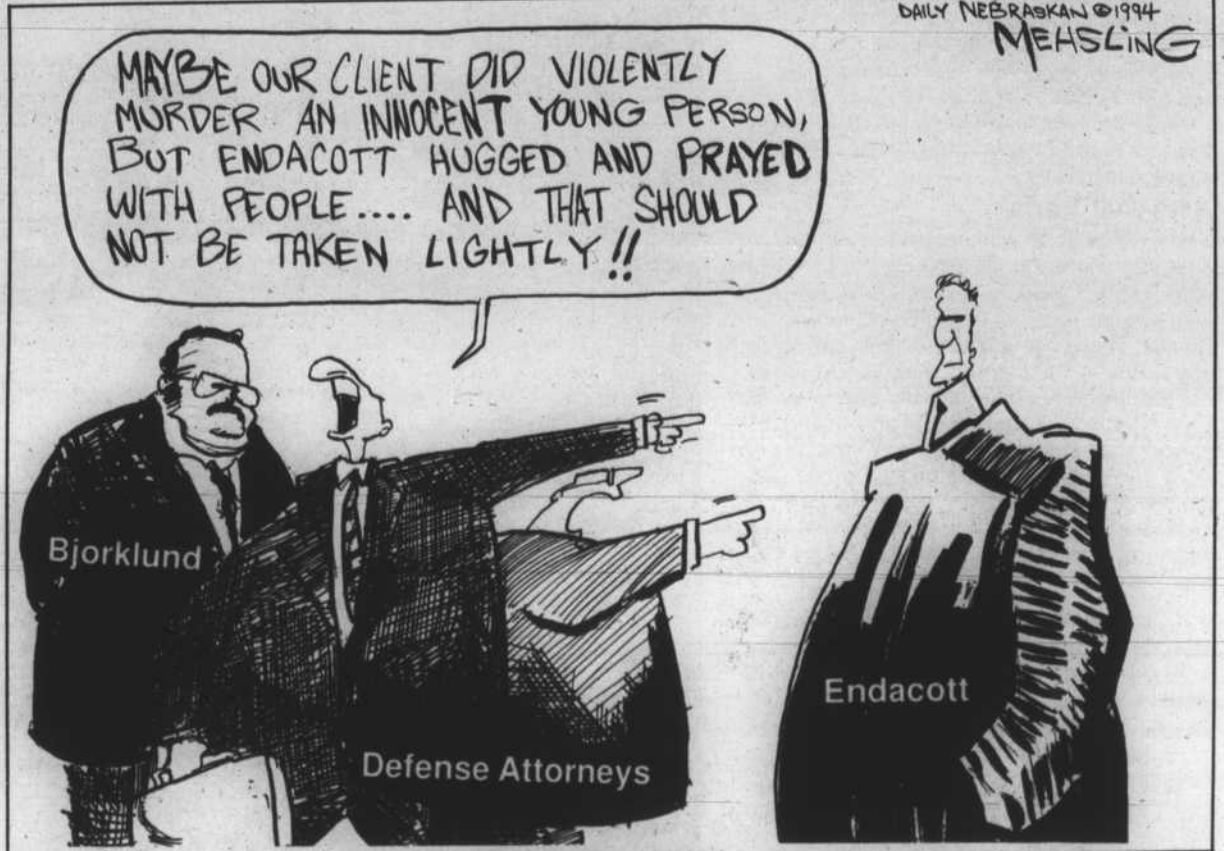
There are many lessons we can learn from Nixon's life. Some are about perseverance and never giving up. Others are about the necessity for accountability in government. In sum, they define a very complex man.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Spring 1994 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents. Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author. The regents publish the Daily Nebraskan. They establish the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.

LETTER POLICY

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others. Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject all material submitted. Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. The editor decides whether material should run as a guest opinion. Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous submissions will not be published. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted. Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.



GUEST OPINION

## Regent won't, can't quiet down

Editor's note: University of Nebraska Regent Robert Allen of Hastings has recently been criticized for his public criticism in The Lincoln Star of UNL Chancellor Graham Spanier's leadership.

In response to your "Quiet down" editorial (DN, April 20, 1994) — you and Regent Chairman Charles Wilson are wrong in suggesting that a regent should deal with a chancellor "directly" on the issues I have raised with Chancellor Graham Spanier.

Please note, a regent has no authority to deal with a chancellor "directly" as Wilson suggested or "internally" as you suggested. This is the responsibility of his boss, the president, Dennis Smith.

Our chairman, Mr. Wilson, does not seem to understand it is the regent's responsibility to work with the president in setting policy as a member of a governing board of eight, not a governing board of one. In order to do this, a regent is required to hold the system accountable by asking "hard questions and not be a rubber stamp for administrators" as one of our regents put it. "The duty of the regents is to serve as a member of a policy board, not in the administrative or management role."

I have received a number of serious complaints from constituents, faculty, administrators and students regarding Spanier's continual effort to push his agenda for political correctness and his very liberal sociological beliefs, as well as his craving for public attention. These people want the university to pursue an educational agenda; not a social agenda that emphasizes pink triangles and crisis counseling for homosexuals.

In the same issue as the editorial, you published a story that said "Regent Chairman Charles Wilson said 'if Allen had a problem with the way Spanier handled things, he should take it up directly with Spanier or with the University of Nebraska Board of Regents or NU President Dennis Smith.'"

What Wilson seems to forget is that what he is suggesting is exactly what I did do. On March 24 at a Friday regent meeting on academics, I brought up my concerns to Chancellor Spanier. The president, the chancellor and regents, including Wilson, were all part of the meeting. This is what a regent is supposed to do. A regent has no authority to issue instructions to a chancellor. It is a regent's obligation to follow up on the concerns of his constituents by seeking information and by keeping the public informed.

The story went on to quote Wilson, "I don't see what purpose is being served by criticizing the chancellor, criticizing in the press. Why write a



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letter to the editor? What's the editor going to do about it?" Wilson also said in the story that my view of Spanier was not widely held and "off the mark." "My perception is that his views are not shared by other persons on the board," Wilson said.

These remarks by Dr. Wilson show how out of touch he is. It is further proof why some of us asked Wilson not to be chairman this year. We were told 2 1/2 years ago, when John Payne was elected chairman, that it is customary to elect a regent chairman who is up for election. Regent Rosemary Skrupa of Omaha wanted the position and is up for re-election (Wilson is not); however, Wilson insisted on being chairman anyway. The two of us exchanged several letters regarding this.

Had Regent Wilson bothered to ask, I would have been happy to explain to him why the information I provided to The Lincoln Star was published in its Letter to the Editor column. When a newspaper writes an editorial in which you are mentioned, it will normally grant you the opportunity to make a response. Most newspapers put your response under the title "Another Point of View." The Star puts these responses in the Letter to the Editor column. The editorial I responded to was headlined "Criticism of Spanier unfair and inaccurate." This editorial was written because of Regent Wilson's criticism of me for questioning Chancellor Spanier at our March 24 meeting. I wrote an explanation for each of the points mentioned in the editorial.

The information I brought up at the meeting and in my explanation to the Star was not unfair and inaccurate — it was information that had been brought up earlier by the Daily Nebraskan as well as the Lincoln and Omaha newspapers.

The Daily Nebraskan published a news article Dec. 1, 1993 entitled "Student leaders: UNL should get back to basics." The article was very critical of the things happening under Spanier's leadership. It quoted former University of Nebraska at Kearney Student Regent Robert Caldwell as saying, "We know we're headed in the wrong direction when on over 600 radio stations across the nation, Rush

Limbaugh is calling the Big Red the Big Pink. Let's get back to the basics. Let's get back to academics."

This article quoted former UNL Student Regent Andrew Sigerson as saying UNL had the wrong priorities when it focused on the controversial "pink triangle" stickers.

An Oct. 15, 1993, editorial in the Star entitled "UNL is robotically PC" said, "University officials have become robots to political correctness. Pink triangles are the latest example." The editorial went on to say "this personal symbol quickly becomes a political emblem in the current climate of almost obsessive attention to sensitivity."

The Omaha World-Herald published on their editorial page an article entitled "Political Correctness Taking Root at UNL," which was written by a senior from UNL. The student criticized a memo that was circulated, mentioning the facilitation of confidential contact with other gays, lesbians and bisexuals. The writer called this a "dating service."

Besides having a problem with Spanier's style of leadership, we're having a similar problem with Regent Chairman Wilson.

After our March 24 meeting a World-Herald story said: "I had to restrain him," Dr. Wilson said Saturday of President Smith. "He said 'Should I say something?' and I said 'No, it's just Allen rambling (about students and academics).'"

Here we have an example of our chairman not only attempting to dictate what the regents should say, but also what our new president should say.

Wilson's criticism of me to the reporters after our March 24 meeting is the reason the Star editorial was written. My response to that editorial is what Wilson is now objecting to.

Wilson is well aware that I am in the midst of a re-election effort, and his comments are obviously designed to hurt me in this regard. However, I will continue to talk about the concerns that have been raised to me by so many of our Nebraska citizens throughout my campaign.