

OPINION

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Daily Nebraskan

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EDITORIAL

Tough decisions

Journalists may face ethical dilemmas

Most of the time, a journalist's work is routine. Movies have glamorized the journalist's profession. We've had behind-the-scenes looks, as stars from Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman to Denzel Washington and Julia Roberts have broken "the big story."



Bret Gottschall/DN

But suspension of disbelief in movies often influences the public's views of reality. This is especially true with newspaper movies, as civilians have little knowledge of what exactly the journalist's job entails.

Most of the time, a journalist's work is routine.

But work was anything but routine last Friday for Viorel Florescu, a photographer for Newsday.

Florescu was on assignment in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Last Friday, he lived guts-and-glory journalism. Literally.

In Florescu's words:

"He was hiding behind a wall when a group of men armed with an M-1 rifle, machetes, knives, handguns and stones came running down the street. I began taking pictures.

"They came upon him. I was 30 feet away at the time but ran toward them as I saw they were about to attack the crouching young Haitian. He had a look of shock on his face, his eyes bulging.

"Then, one of the attackers aimed his pistol and shot him at almost point-blank range in the head and torso. The others pelted him with rocks, one the size of a football, and hit him with sticks."

Several journalists then carried the victim from the scene, away, until an ambulance arrived. The attackers continued to throw rocks and sticks the whole time.

Florescu's stunning picture — of the young man cowering in the street before an arm and a gun — ran in newspapers nationwide.

Sometimes, journalists are faced with ethical situations and must make decisions about where to draw the line of objectivism — the line where being a journalist begins and being a person ends. Those are never easy decisions.

Florescu and the other journalists made a decision to help the man who was assaulted. They could have stood by and watched a human die at the hands of a mob. Instead, they put down camera and note pad to save a life.

The Daily Nebraskan commends the journalists who carried the victim away from a certain, brutal death.

It is good to know they had more on their minds than just getting a story or photo to give to their editors.

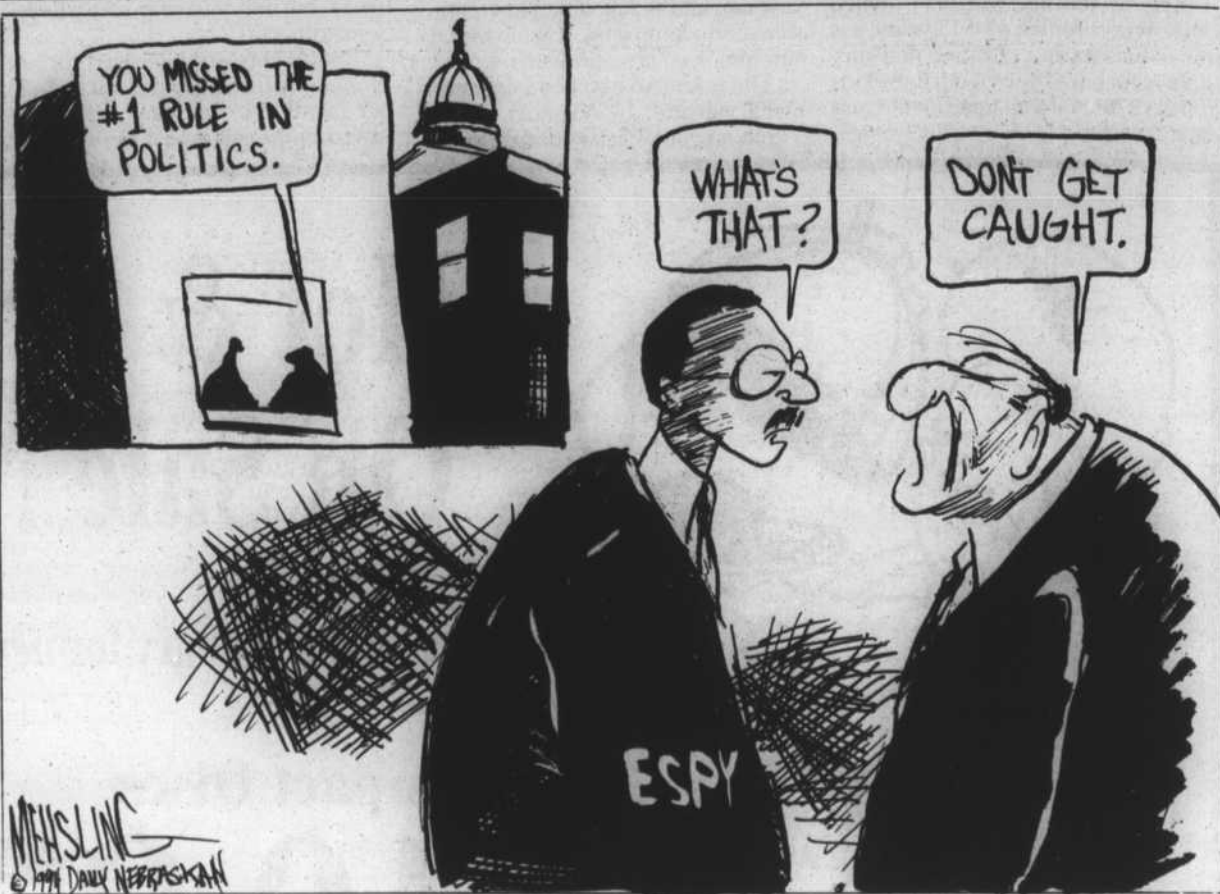
They got one anyway.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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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.



MEHSLING
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Regent race

The profile of Omaha businessman and regent candidate Drew Miller (Sept. 28, 1994) was a classic example of how politicians speak out of both sides of their mouths. Mr. Miller first said that he would encourage the university to adopt techniques that would help cut administrative costs.

On the other hand, he supports the creation of a separate college of engineering at UNL, which will undoubtedly increase the administrative costs he so wants to reduce. It is amazing how such a reversal can occur in a few short paragraphs!

We need regents concerned with providing quality, affordable education at the University of Nebraska, not ones interested in picking up trophies for their home districts.

Marc Schulte
senior
civil engineering

Homecoming royalty

In 1751, Benjamin Franklin complained that the proportion of the world's "purely white People" was too small, and expressed the wish that "their numbers were increased." By clearing America of woods, Franklin hoped to "reflect a brighter light to the eyes of inhabitants in Mars or Venus," and questioned "why should we in the sight of superior beings darken its people? Why increase the sons of Africa by planting them in America, where we have so fair and opportunity, by excluding all blacks and tawneys, of increasing the lovely white and red." ("Four Papers of Benjamin Franklin," L. Labaree, ed. (1959).)

I paraphrase the quote from Franklin as an illustration of what little has changed since 1751 in the minds of the American majority. In rebuttal to the criticism of whether there was a clear bias in the homecoming royalty committee to exclude non-greeks, off campus students and minorities, James Griesen, vice chancellor for student affairs, responded that he felt the two students probably were disappointed they hadn't made the cut.

How in one breath can someone of the esteemed position of vice chancellor for all student affairs



Bret Gottschall/DN

trivialize a criticism that is obviously based in fact, not the wandering paranoia of two bitter minorities, which was implied by his statement. His choice of words, "probably a matter of disappointment" suggests he doesn't know, and that as vice chancellor, he needs to find out if the acquisitions are groundless.

One only needs to look at the statistical breakdown of the nominees to see that the committee was biased, exclusive instead of inclusive, and willfully ignorant of the diversity of this campus and the world. Ben Franklin was brutal but honest in his stating the fear of much of America's majority that to include the world's people of color is to shine the light on the flaws of their own race and to diminish it to the extent that they will no longer be seen by the world at large as superior, but ordinary and petty at worst.

As a graduate student who is working on her thesis, I have had the opportunity to read volumes of research materials on everything from evolution to global economics — most of which has been written by members of the American majority and much of it having been written by the male gender of the American majority. Suffice it to say that I am never surprised by the ability of a group to tailor even the minutest point to favor their position and further, to employ "diminishment" and "divide and conquer" to bury the opposition and discredit their argument as petty and minuscule.

So I say to the young minority women, off-campus students, minority student population in general and non-greeks that you should not be surprised by the queer pro quo; it is the maintenance of

the status quo that forces all of us to take a subservient role.

Keep pushing and don't allow the elite to win. Keep challenging, keep speaking up and keep commanding respect and you eventually will succeed.

Thyra Lowe
graduate student
community regional planning

Culture war

Last Friday, Jamie Karl wrote a column blasting UNL's supposed lack of "traditional values," but I have one he forgot. The Daily Nebraskan used to be able to hire columnists who did not confuse neo-Conservative with neo-Nazi. What happened?

I am tired of the hypocritical half-thought cries for 'traditional values' when the people crying it selectively forget themselves. Mr. Karl, maybe those people you consider a 'freak show' are in fact suggesting that traditional Christian values like acceptance, love and compassion should be applied to everyone, not just members of your little clique.

If you listened to the multitude of voices on this campus, perhaps you would find a multitude of conflicts within what you thought was the peace of your hometown. If so, you would find those NORML longhairs and homosexual advocates and multiculturalists are folks who had to escape from small towns to regain who they are. You would find people like them in your own town afraid to speak out because they know the 'Christian tolerance' awaiting them.

If there is a 'culture war,' it is what has formed this nation, not some recent aberration. What you rail against is actually a recent understanding of the truth, and you should avail yourself of the chance to learn more about it. Even if you don't ultimately agree with them, a traditional value you forgot to mention is listening to others, and you owe a person that before you pass judgment.

Yes, the culture war will continue, but as one who has faith in the values of the founders of the nation, I believe truth will win from the present Babylon of voices, and I think ignorance will loose.

Trevor McArthur
senior
secondary education