

OPINION

Daily Nebraskan

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EDITORIAL

Language lesson

Man's death deserves serious attention

The death of Francisco Renteria following his arrest by Lincoln police officers deserves the serious attention of the Lincoln community.

Five Lincoln police officers and one University of Nebraska-Lincoln police officer attempted Friday to subdue Renteria, 30, after the UNL officer mistakenly identified Renteria as a man who allegedly violated a protection order.

Renteria died Saturday at Lincoln General Hospital. Initial autopsy reports showed he did not have a pre-existing condition. And Renteria was not the man authorities wanted.

He did not speak English.

Appropriately, task forces have been formed to investigate the issue. The Nebraska State Patrol is investigating the Lincoln Police Department, and Chancellor Graham Spanier appointed a four-member faculty committee to review the UNL department's role in the case.

Carlos Monzon, a lawyer for the Renteria family, said Tuesday there was "a high possibility" that Renteria had suffered broken bones.

Throughout history, police brutality has been a major contributor to racial tension. Yet, we may never be given a definitive answer as to whether or not excessive force was intentionally used.

But we can demand that every step be taken to ensure such questions will not have to be answered again.

Lincoln Police Chief Tom Casady said Thursday that police were not to blame for the failed communication because two of the officers at the scene had at least some background in Spanish.

Casady said an LPD officer who was considered fluent in Spanish arrived at the scene after the struggle with Renteria was over.

Both Casady and UNL Police Chief Ken Cauble said their departments had a group of volunteer translators who could be called when needed. Cauble would not comment as to whether the UNL officer attempted to call a translator to the scene.

In any case, every effort should be taken to address, in a language the person can understand, someone who is being arrested.

This experience would be extremely frightening to anyone who was taken into custody by officers who spoke a foreign language.

The most important thing as a community we can do is make sure the incident is investigated properly and demand that such situations do not recur.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"I feel something in my heart that is so big, I have no way of comparing it. I don't want anything unjust for anyone. I just want justice."

— Maria Vega, mother of Francisco Renteria, who died last Saturday in Lincoln while in police custody.

"People ought to be pretty darn cautious about speculating or filling in the blanks."

— Tom Casady, Lincoln chief of police, about the speculation from the Hispanic community about police involvement in Renteria's death.

"It's weird doing an interview with the DN when I'm all the way at the other end of the coast."

— Heidi Ore of Mercy Rule about the band's new album.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 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.

Congressman, I'm going to be in your district next week... How would you like me to campaign for you?



Senator... I'm going to be in your state next week...!



Busy... Heck, no... I'd love to campaign for you!!



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor's note: Marc Schulte's letter (DN, Oct. 6, 1994) stated Regent candidate Drew Miller supported the creation of a separate college of engineering at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The letter was incorrectly printed to say he supported the new college at "UNL." We regret the error.

Haitian leaders

Recently, President Clinton was talking on nationwide television about how brutal Haiti's military leaders were. He talked about the horribly mutilated bodies found in the streets, the use of rape as a political weapon against dissidents and the killing of orphaned children.

Now, suddenly, they are not such bad guys after all and an amnesty has been granted to them. They are even allowed to still live in the country.

Can anyone imagine a leftist leader that was being deposed by U.S. forces being treated so compassionately? If this were Castro instead of Cedras, how would he be treated? How were Sukarno, Lumumba and Allende treated in the CIA-sponsored coups that overthrew their governments? They were killed!

It seems that a right-wing leader who helps the rich and powerful, undermines all the human rights abuses, is not really a vicious criminal, but just a little misguided and overzealous.

Governments run by big business, such as the United States, do not make interventions in foreign countries on behalf of the common people of that country or of the United States. They make interventions on behalf of big business!

Aristide will be restored but only as a figurehead with no real power. He will never again be able to threaten the profits of the American assembly plants in Haiti by attempting to raise the minimum wage from 14 cents an hour to 50 cents an hour. The Haitian people lose again, as they have many times since their slave armies defeated Napoleon's troops in 1804.

Gary Sudborough
Bellflower, Calif.

Architecture policy

The likely recommendation by the College of Architecture to require future students to purchase \$3,000 computers, just as they buy books and classroom supplies, is a troubling, outrageous trend.

The requirement is a wonderful



Amy Schmidt/DN

way for a department to avoid the cost of providing adequate labs and equipment. It's ironic that the College of Architecture sees the requirement so necessary for students individually when its own planning record appears so dismal in providing a lab of, according to the recent DN editorial, no more than 25 computers.

While some people say it is a way of putting students at the "cutting edge," I think it is a subtle way of cutting students — the financially disadvantaged students — from yet another educational opportunity.

Faced with that kind of added cost to education, some students will be discouraged from proceeding into that curriculum. Or they will come out of that area of study with a larger debt and an outdated computer.

Maybe the College of Architecture just wants rich kids to apply.

There is something sad about the notion that the student who buys the most "things" for himself or herself is the student who will reach the "cutting edge." Education should be a great "equalizer" and a place where opportunities and resources are abundant and available, rather than further-restricted and higher-priced.

David Roberts
graduate student
journalism

Dry campus

I have read and seen a lot of publicity concerning alcohol usage on the UNL campus. It is common knowledge that this campus is one of many across this country that does not allow alcohol. However, I have witnessed the hypocrisy of a rule that only seems to concern the students.

If this is a dry campus, then why does the administration condone the use of alcoholic beverages at the Lied Center, the Wick Alumni Center and, above all, UNL football games? Does the rule only stand for those who this university was founded for — the students? Or is it just that money can buy anything?

A party for the upper echelon with cases of beer stacked outside the back door the morning after. Kegs and cases of beer displayed openly in the tailgates of boosters who have paid their money to park close to the stadium.

Yet, students are chastised and criticized for their alcohol usage. It is just my opinion, but it has been stated before, that students are going to get the alcohol anyway. Why shouldn't they be allowed to drink in the privacy and safety of their own room instead of risking driving or even walking back drunk?

The administration would like us to think that drinking is an unacceptable practice. However, they do not set an example of this. They, as well as society in general, have made alcohol the social drug preferred by all. I have seen more than one booster staggering, thoroughly intoxicated, towards the stadium on game days.

As a non-drinker, I think I can honestly express an unbiased view of the subject. If the rules are set up for all of those who use the university, then they should be enforced as such.

Kathy Lemons
senior
fisheries and wildlife

Marshall letter

Doug Alexander: Regarding your statement (DN, Oct. 5, 1994) "Kendra Marshall has a lot of explaining to do — not only to her parents and friends but to everyone." Kendra has no one to answer to. Whatever her reasons for leaving, they are HER reasons. Thank you for your concern. However, you need not bother yourself with issues that do not pertain to you. I don't understand your rationale for bringing this issue to our attention. This is not a public concern any longer.

For those of us who have grown up with Kendra, we love and accept her for who she is and need no explanations; we are just happy to have her home.

Dave Sheets
senior
secondary education