

DEB MCADAMS

Don't judge police too soon

The recent wholesale condemnation of the Lincoln Police Department is unreasonable and unfair.

Francisco Renteria, a 29-year-old man from Mexico, died following an arrest based on mistaken identity.

His death may have been the result of his treatment during the arrest, or it may have been the inadvertent result of a very bizarre series of circumstances.

Right now, the public doesn't know what really happened, and charges of racism are premature and unproven. The more inclined we are to jump to the conclusion of racism, the more it sounds like we're crying wolf.

It's true that Renteria's death is a bewildering tragedy. His family has every right to demand accountability from the police department as well as investigators.

The reaction of the Hispanic community also is understandable. Hispanics, like so many others, know that civil rights are ultimately issued by those who hire, fire, award and protect.

Renteria suffered the ultimate violation of his civil rights, and we want to know why it happened. Unfortunately, some people seem to think they already know why it happened: because a gang of police officers beat a man to death for being Mexican.

The people who have come to this conclusion evidently have no interest in how often the police are called into the Holdrege Street area where Renteria was arrested. They probably have no idea about the frequency and the nature of those calls.

Several years ago, when I lived a few blocks south of Holdrege on 29th street, several blue and whites lined the street nearly once a week. The neighbors evidently made a habit of getting drunk and threatening to kill one another.

Police seldom handle domestic disturbance calls without assistance.



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They are among the most potentially violent situations. Protection orders are often issued in cases of domestic violence.

UNL Police officer Charlotte Veskrna apparently thought Renteria resembled the the description of a man who had violated a protection order. Perhaps if Renteria had cooperated with Veskrna, she could have verified his mistaken identity. Instead, Renteria didn't cooperate with Veskrna, who called for assistance.

The officers who answered Veskrna's call had a combined total of 42 years of experience on the force. There is no information available to the public that suggests these officers handled this arrest differently from any other.

People who are considered to be resisting arrest, as was Renteria, generally are subdued. The question in this case is one of force.

Did the police use necessary, or excessive force?

The public has a responsibility to condemn the use of excessive force, but defining excessive force may vary with one's proximity to violence.

The university, the county attorney's office and the Nebraska State Patrol are trying to determine if excessive force caused Renteria's death. If so, those responsible will be prosecuted.

If the grand jury finds excessive force was employed because of Renteria's race, then, and only then, is community outrage justified.

This community already has demonstrated its disapproval of racism. We are actively working within our institutions to include and recognize cultural diversity. Nebraska is one of few states that will soon implement a multicultural plan in elementary and secondary school curriculums.

We never will eliminate racism in our society, but we can make it unacceptable. We have a long way to go, but we are trying to embrace the different cultures in our society.

It will not help us understand our differences if we assume racism motivates every incident between police and nonwhite people.

Criticizing police for not speaking Spanish or for not being informed about Hispanic "machismo" doesn't advance cultural awareness. After living in the United States for eight years, Renteria apparently had not bothered to learn English and possibly failed to recognize the position of women in authority in American society.

Although it appears that Francisco Renteria died in a senseless and brutal way, we still don't know if the circumstances were coincidental or intentional.

Until we do, the police deserve some degree of presumption of innocence. Regardless of what comes from this incident, they already have learned a bitter lesson about cultural diversity.

McAdams is a junior-news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

SHANE TUCKER

Gays spoil society's sexuality

National Coming Out Day is upon us, and as we celebrate the most vulgar and decadent of humanity's perverse "pleasures," we should bear in mind that not only are the pink-triangle types on campus celebrating a physically and spiritually harmful practice, they're also celebrating something that's abnormal — something that's downright weird.

Unfortunately, modern politically correct group-think has convinced us that we can't make judgments about the lifestyles of other people (or at least conservatives can't).

Such foolish rhetoric is fueled by the notion that a person's sexual preference is somehow uncontrollable, that it is an innate part of our character. However, there's considerable evidence out there that seems to suggest otherwise.

In the book "Sexual Preference, its Development in Men and Women," researchers Alan Bell, Martin Weinberg, and Sue Hammersmith outline a number of childhood relationships that apparently affect one's adult sexual orientation. Perhaps of greatest importance was the childhood relationship with the father.

It appears that 72 percent of adult male homosexuals said they were either very little or not at all like their fathers; only 36 percent of adult female homosexuals said they liked their fathers.

To be categorized as homosexual is not dependent upon one's relationship with one's father. It would seem, if homosexuality is an equal disposition to heterosexuality, that family relations would be similar between the two. However, they are not. In fact, in general, heterosexuals have a better relationship with both parents, according to the book.

Another interesting tidbit offered by the book is the role of gender nonconformity during the formative



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years of a homosexual's life span. Among adult male homosexuals, only 11 percent enjoyed boys' activities and only 18 percent called themselves masculine when growing up. Among adult female homosexuals, 17 percent liked boys' activities and 62 percent called themselves masculine.

It appears the roles we allow our children to play as they grow up greatly affect their orientation when they reach sexual maturity.

"Doesn't Bobby look cute in that dress," we might say to our friends at the cocktail party, only to find that 10 years down the road Bobby thinks he looks cute in the dress, too.

Even if there is no sociological data available, however, the wise man can easily see the inherent stupidity of an argument that maintains our sexual choices and actions are preordained. Even if there is some level — let's say a huge level — of innate sexual orientation, the argument of the homosexual community maintains that one cannot control one's personal actions.

I would think the homosexual would be insulted by this argument: the assertion that gays, like wild beasts, have no control over their sexual activity. Orientation becomes equivalent to action.

Maybe they are right — after all, promiscuity seems to be much more prevalent among homosexuals than it is among their heterosexual

counterparts — but I think it's just a cop out. And a dangerous cop out at that.

To disregard our personal actions as the effect of some inborn trait is irresponsible to say the least. And if the reader believes that sort of gibberish, he should withhold judgment on me, for, after all, I'm genetically conservative.

The bottom line is that there are sexual deviants out there. How they got to be that way we can only guess, but we know we share a world with gays, and pedophiles, and necrophiles, and guys who like sheep and gerbils, and heterosexual sadomasochists, and a plethora of other weirdos. But just because they exist doesn't mean they're normal; it doesn't mean we have to accept them or change our societal values to accommodate them.

It would be wise for us to realize this quickly, before we're forced to raise our children in a world where gender nonconformity is status quo, and sodomy is the preferred way of life.

A nonviolent political and social movement in reaction to the wiles of the homosexual community is necessary not only for the sake of normal folk and our children, but also for the sake of the morally degenerate as well.

Anything less would be unconscionable.

Tucker is a senior biology major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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Health Policy and Jewish Concepts of Social Justice

The Honorable Richard D. Lamm
 Schlesinger Professor of Social Justice and Judaic Studies, UNL
 Director, Center for Public Policy and Contemporary Issues
 University of Denver
 Governor of Colorado, 1975-1987

October 13, 1994
 7:30 p.m.
Sheldon Auditorium
 12th & R Streets
 Reception Following

Participating Discussants
 Rabbi Myer Kripke
 Omaha
 Dr. Walter Friedlander
 Professor Emeritus, UNMC Omaha
 Cantor Michael Weisser
 Lincoln

Norman and Bernice Harris Center for Judaic Studies
 University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Campus Interviews
 October 25, 1994

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