

SHANE TUCKER

Cops 'cuff public with tyranny

Perhaps it's against my traditionalist instincts, and I apologize if I offend anyone, but sometimes cops in Lincoln really suck.

The Renteria case should really be no surprise. A bunch of cops who think they're right nab a guy who knows he's right. The unfortunate victim resists — as any man with an ounce of pride would when unjustly accused — and is beaten.

This certainly doesn't apply to all officers of the law, but there's a nice big chunk of them out there with some sort of "me-have-big-gun, me-real-bad-ass" attitude when dealing with the general public.

I'll offer an example from my own life:

It's a cold wintery night as a small group of friends and I leave the Lincoln bar scene to hit an after-hours party on the east side of town. My general lack of poor judgment is heightened by several pitchers consumed during the evening, and I sneak a three-quarters consumed bottle of Coors Light out of the establishment.

Well, not only am I stupid, but I'm also very slow and reach the car after my friends are already inside. Our designated driver — we'll call him Jay to protect his identity — has the heater cranked, and everyone looks very cozy, patiently waiting for their friend to catch up.

I reach down to the door handle only to find that a friend of mine has locked it — we'll call him our esteemed ASUN President Andrew Loudon, to protect his anonymity.

"Sorry Tucker, it's locked," Loudon smirks. "Looks like you're too slow."

At this point, Jay decides it's time to take off and leave his drunk friend with a now empty beer bottle in hand in the middle of P Street.

Being ever-rational, I decide to swan dive onto the hood of Jay's car. Undaunted by my courage, Jay continues to drive, spilling my fragile body onto the asphalt and propelling the beer bottle under a



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nearby car. I raise my battered body from the street to chase after Jay's car, waiting for me half a block away.

"You better stop right there son, 'less you wanna run all the way to jail," says Officer Hemorrhoid from behind me.

I turn from Jay's quickly departing Bonneville and walk back towards the man in blue, pondering whether it's better to come clean with the cop or fabricate some outlandish tale that will get me out of this situation.

"Let's see some ID."
Whoops, now there's another problem. I'm a minor, the only ID I have says I'm someone else, someone much taller, much broader, much better looking, and most importantly, much older than myself. I decide a little white lie never hurt anyone.

"I don't have any ID officer," I say, but then willingly tell him my name, address, and age. I whip out my wallet to prove this to him and clumsily drop my fake onto the ground with a few other cards and papers, kicking the ID under his car.

Now I'm sure Officer Spank is a very fine policeman, but he's not very bright, and the flurry of papers confuse him. Unconcerned with the mess on the ground, he grabs my wallet and rifles through it. Finding nothing, he throws me against the hood of his car to search through my pockets. Sensing deception, he becomes frustrated and decides to handcuff me. He throws me into the back seat of his fine automobile,

and we drive off.

By this point, I'm beginning to wonder why he found it necessary to handcuff my buck-thirty frame, why I'm now in the back of his car, and where exactly he's taking me.

The cop informs me I'm being charged with littering and minor in possession. MIP because I had an empty bottle, littering because I got rid of it. I find this intuitive leap interesting, since the officer rounded the corner after I was already on the ground, the bottle already out of my possession. His philosophy, however, is that intuition is nine-tenths of the law, so he drops me off at Cornhusker Detox and writes out a couple of tickets.

That I got the tickets is really not a big deal; I did the crime, I get what I deserve. However, the officer's methods were concerning. His overbearing, overzealous attitude coupled with a strong reliance on intuition over fact are a nice recipe for a cop who would beat the crap out of some innocent suspect.

These are traits we see far too often in the police of our fair city: weekend warrior types who would've become security guards if they hadn't made it as cops. Men and women who are more enthralled by their ability to oppress than to protect and serve.

I'm just glad I could speak English.

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

LORI LYN ARTHUR

Correctness brings race rifts

One night several years ago, I watched "A Dry White Season." My friend was supposed to rent "St. Elmo's Fire" or some other light comedy. She rented "A Dry White Season," then fell asleep before the beginning credits.

I watched this movie without interruption, except for my own sobs and sniffles. I loved the movie, but I was left with a deep feeling of guilt.

The next day, I called the man I was dating at the time to apologize for being white.

After he stopped laughing at me, he asked me what my problem was.

We got into a deep conversation on apartheid and race relations. It soon became clear that I, a white woman, was far more aware of racial tensions than he, a black man from Newark, N.J.

Throughout our conversation, I used the term African American. After awhile he corrected me, saying he preferred to be called black.

"If I am African American, you're English, Welsh, Scottish, etc., American; and there's no way I'm going through all that," he said. "Besides, you look Irish."

Well, excuse me. I thought I was being politically correct.

To hell with political correctness. It's ruining race relations, anyway.

Communication is the key to understanding. If everyone is afraid of offending everyone else, no one is going to talk.

Segregation here we come.

When I was in grade school, there was one black child in my class. His name was Dan. He had always been my friend without any



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thought of differences.

One day, some of my friends and I wanted to know what his hair felt like. We asked if we could touch it. He bent down, and we all touched his head.

If that were to happen today, all hell would break loose.

It wasn't rude. It wasn't a racist thing to do. It was children wanting to understand what makes some people look different from others. It's communication, and it is good.

Recently, a new girl was hired where I work. She's Puerto Rican. Her skin is a beautiful light brown, her hair and eyes very dark. Her last name is Hispanic but could be Filipino.

No one would dare ask her nationality. It wouldn't be politically correct. So we speculated.

That's stupid. Now that I've gotten to know her, I asked if she would have been offended if I had asked her nationality. She laughed and said, "No!"

I don't have a problem with rules, for the most part. I really just have problems when I don't know what the rules are. I can follow them just fine, usually.

That's the problem with political

correctness. Just when I think I have it all right, someone changes the rules on me. Geesh.

If you are Sioux and want to be called Sioux, not Native American or American Indian or of a tribal nation, tell me when we meet. I can say Sioux, but I don't read minds.

And I don't mean to offend anyone if I use the wrong term. Intention is relevant in communication.

I saw a woman on Oprah once who said that it didn't matter what the intention of the statement was. If she is offended, the person is a racist.

That's ridiculous.

If someone uses a term you find offensive, take the time to find out what the person really meant.

Maybe the person really is a bigot, in which case, walk away. Bigots aren't worth the effort of trying to educate. They can't learn.

But maybe the person just didn't know the proper term. Take the time to educate people about your culture. You may make a new friend.

Arthur is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.




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