

CINDY LANGE-KUBICK

# Interview minefield tests faith

In less than two hours, dressed in black pumps and a borrowed Anne Klein blazer, I will navigate a minefield.

I have a job interview. I've held my share of jobs, mind you, but most of them had only two major requirements: the ability to make change and the willingness to wear a hairnet.

I also spent five years attempting to raise children, a job that had no formal requirements but should have.

Now, after several years at this fine institution, I'm ready for something more; but I simply don't have the clothes or confidence to do it.

So to prepare for this monumental event, I have taken a few steps: First, I called my sister begging for advice and 1990s era clothing.

"Do you need shoes, too?" she asked.

I checked my feet: Birkenstocks; I checked my closet: Nikes.

"Yes, please," I answered humbly.

Next I checked out a couple of books, "Image Impact," "Sweaty Palms," and "Knock 'Em Dead."

Alas, the books only served to confuse me.

They said I needed to be eager — but not too eager.

Confident but not overbearing, assertive without being aggressive, attractive but not sexy.

I should exude confidence in my body language, professionalism in my dress, honesty and resoluteness in my demeanor.

I need to make my defects sound like assets and my assets sound better than they actually are.

I need to be a team player, as well as someone who works well independently.

Be prepared, the books advised, to answer questions about your goals (short-term to get through the interview without fainting),



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interests (writing and food — not necessarily in that order), strengths, weaknesses (chocolate), expectations, challenges, motivations (lack of money) and accomplishments.

My husband said to "wear makeup." My daughter, age 10, offered me hers.

My son said I shouldn't take the job unless they'd let me off at 3 p.m., so I could be home when he got out of school.

My parents said they would pray for me. Thanks, I'll need it.

Oh, and above all, everyone said I should act naturally and just "be myself."

How, I ask you, can I "be myself," in clothing I've usurped from my sister, pantyhose that have cut off the circulation to my lower torso and shoes with an inch of Kleenex stuck in the toes?

I feel like a contestant on "To Tell The Truth."

"Will the real Cindy Lange-Kubick please stand up?"

It isn't easy, but hey, I'm willing to go to any lengths.

All of the advice friends, family and interview experts have given me is indeed important, albeit confusing. (Ask about vacation time; don't ask. Offer to shake hands; don't offer.)

But there are a few things I intuitively knew ahead of time.

One thing is certain: I need to be sure that I show up with dry palms, flossed teeth and a snot-free nose. (Nothing will ruin my chance

for gainful employment faster than clammy hands, postnasal drip and popcorn particles between my front teeth.)

Right now I feel fairly calm. I can walk in the pumps, — well almost — my palms are dry, my mind is clear — not empty, clear — and I'm starting to feel at home in the borrowed clothes.

If only I could do something about the inevitable, enormous before-all-important-events-in-my-life red zit on my chin.

If I try to hide it with makeup, it will look like I'm trying to hide it with makeup. But, if I leave it alone, the interviewer's eyes will fixate on it, and the words of wisdom spewing from my mouth will be lost forever.

It's a dilemma indeed.

But, like the books say, accentuate the positive. After all, having acne at 34 could be, in the eyes of my potential employer, a plus — a sign of youthfulness.

It is part of the "real" me. The person that still exists underneath the shoulder pads, the "peach blossom" lipstick and the sheer, leg-hugging hosiery.

I hope the two "me"s can stick together long enough for the interview.

Wish us luck.

*Lange-Kubick is a senior news-editorial and sociology major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.*

SIMON LIVERANI

# In politics, image is everything

As a foreigner, I have no interest in the upcoming elections. Well, actually, I have a different kind of interest than if I were to vote.

I am curious to see a new facet of American culture. After all, America is the oldest democracy in the world.

It is enlightening to see how the campaigns are handled from a public relations standpoint and to view what the preferred TV ads look like. What comes across is a very different concept of democracy from the one applied in most European countries.

Political campaigns in the United States are played purely on image, relegating real issues to the role of catchy but empty slogans. The primary asset a candidate needs is a photogenic appearance. That alone seems to guarantee sympathy and votes.

This precedent was set by J.F. Kennedy in his debates with Nixon. Since then, television has become the single most important tool in politics. Politicians today must come in an attractive package with a memorable tag line and catchy advertising copy. Advertising is what ultimately makes or breaks a candidate.

The current campaigns strike me as being particularly rough. The candidates have spent most of their funds on commercials that show their opponents' defects instead of ones that highlight their own assets. The emphasis is on ruining the opponent's credibility and reputation, without creating a real political platform.

My impression is that this kind of campaigning has the sole effect of disgusting the public. This is probably why the voter turnout for elections is so low. Furthermore, the electorate is faced with choosing between two bad candidates; they only have to figure out which



*Instead, (candidates) spend most of their time convincing us that they never smoked pot or had premarital sex. Who cares? They are running for Congress, not the Vatican.*

is bad and which is worse.

The negative image of politics is responsible for today's disenchantment with it. Long gone are the days when people would die for their political beliefs. Today, the terms "politics" and "politician" are to be avoided like the plague.

Being labeled a politician is the kiss of death for any candidate. Sadly, the result of all this will be that Congress will be filled with amateur politicians who will either be eaten alive by the system or adapt to become part of the monster.

It's like the parable of the knight who kills the dragon and then becomes the dragon until the next knight slays him and takes his place.

The dream of having a politician-free Congress is what spurs the public to vote for business people and doctors. This is all done in the hope that Congress will someday stop being a detached entity, and will be reflective of society.

Oliver North's main prerogative is that he ignored the rules of Congress when he was at its service. Colin Powell's talked-about presidential candidacy might turn successful only in light of his distancing himself from politics.

In the 1980s, the same disgust about politics was the prevalent feeling among Italians, so we elected a porn star to sit in the

parliament. Her election was a sign of protest, and it reflected people's frustration. Also, her political rallies were a lot more interesting.

Something of that sort is unthinkable in the United States, where adultery charges destroy a politician's career. In America, people are too caught up in political correctness and false puritanism.


Americans will vote for president Ronald Reagan, who was an informer during the McCarthy era and ruined the lives of countless colleagues just to advance his career. But on the other hand, in the name of puritan ideals, Americans will ruin Gary Hart because of an affair.

This reflects on local campaigns. Candidates don't tell us their plans to improve the economy, the standard of living or minorities' conditions. Instead, they spend most of their time convincing us they never smoked pot or had premarital sex. Who cares? They are running for Congress, not the Vatican.

The problem should not be whether a candidate was clean in high school. The importance should be taken away from appearances and placed upon person's ability, regardless of the skeletons in his/her cupboard.


*Liverani is a junior advertising major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.*

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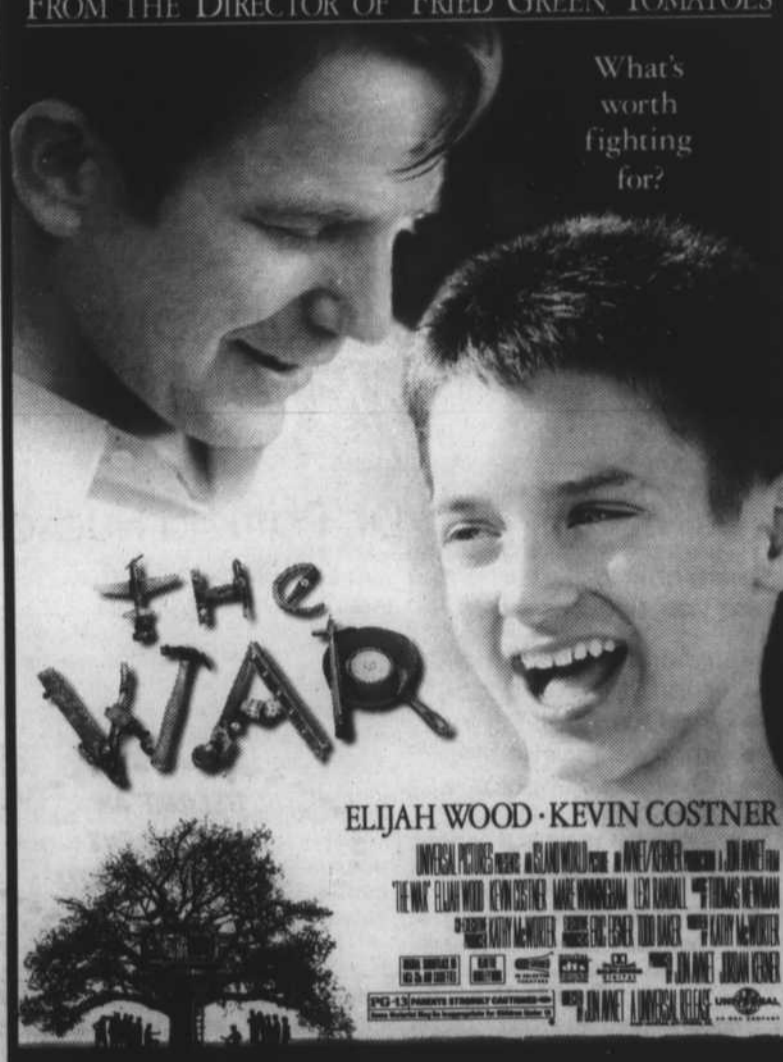
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