

## Jordan's return to save NBA

Jordan! Yes, sports fans, there is a god, and he's about to suit up once again. The greatest basketball player of all time is gearing himself, at least according to ESPN and everyone else, for a return within the next two weeks.

And it couldn't have come at a better time, for both the Chicago Bulls, who are struggling to stay above .500 for the first time in eight years, and for the NBA, which is dying for leadership and class to help overcome the recent ailment of an image problem.

"And now, the starting lineup for your world-champion Chicago Bulls!"

Most of you have probably never been to the old Chicago Stadium, standing shoulder to shoulder with nearly 19,000 screaming Bulls fans as the lights go down and the Alan Parsons Project intro blasts from the public-address system, the spotlights focus on the players as they are introduced one by one until ...

"And at guard, from North Carolina, number 23, Michaaaeel Jorrdaaan!"

Craziness, pure and simple.

By the way, it really irritates me that virtually every sports club, college or pro, has ripped off what the Bulls started: using the Alan Parsons Project music during introductions.

During the past 18 months, my friends and I have been known to scream and chant "Jordan" (forgive me, I'm not worthy) at any given time in the hopes that he will hear us



### Michael Justice

and return to save us from this mediocrity called the 1994-95 NBA season.

Jordan! His retirement resulted in uncontrollable sobbing, weeping, bawling, in cries of agony and despair, and that was just the first day. I'm OK now, thanks to my medication. Oh Michael, we hardly knew ye.

But no more! The Man is back! This is a man who was called the greatest player of all time by Larry Legend himself. This is the same man, the only man, who upstaged Showtime, Magic Johnson.

"Jordan drives the lane, right side, scoops — OH MY! I can't believe it! He changed hands in midair!" (I'm paraphrasing because Red Kerr, the announcer, could barely speak, much less form a sentence.)

Absolutely, undoubtedly and unarguably the single greatest shot in basketball: past, present or future.

This is a man who, on a challenge, closed his eyes and made two consecutive free throws.

This is a man, the only man, who was always double-teamed and

regularly triple-teamed. The Cleveland Cavaliers, among others, made no secret of the fact that they would cover him with three guys. Of course, His Supremeness could only average close to 40 points per game against them.

The New York Knicks spent the last five seasons trading, upgrading and plotting for one goal: to beat Jordan (forgive me, I'm not worthy). Not the Bulls, mind you, just Him, the Man.

It didn't work, even when they cheated.

Jordan! This is the man, the only man, who can save the NBA from itself. There is no discipline, no class, no dignity. Only overpaid brats, who are selfish, greedy, unproven, temperamental, rude, self-indulgent and, on the whole, unlikable at best.

Even the original sinner himself, Charles Barkley, said in a recent NBC interview that the NBA was screwed up. Bench-warmers get a dunk and then act like fools, screaming into the camera.

Well, His Unstoppableness will put an end to that. No amateurs making a mess of His house.

His Incredibleness has even cut the odds three-fold, from 18-1 down to 6-1 to win it all.

With Jordan (forgive me, I'm not worthy) back in the game, I'll take those odds any day.

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

## Three strikes laws apply to jerks, too

At first glance, it seems like a terrible abuse of legal power — a man sent to prison for 25 years to life for stealing one slice of pizza. Yes, only one thin slice of pizza. And it didn't even have everything on it.

But that's what happened to a mope named Jerry Dwayne Williams in a Los Angeles courtroom.

It was Williams' misfortune to have stolen the pizza after California put in one of those tough "three strikes" laws.

This meant that because Williams had four earlier felony convictions — including robbery and attempted robbery — a judge could whack him with the 25-to-life stretch on another conviction.

But why would stealing one slice of pizza be considered a serious crime?

Because after too much drinking with his buddies, Williams, 25, grabbed the pizza slice from a group of children in a restaurant. And one of the kids testified that Williams frightened him.

Williams is unhappy. So is his lawyer. And many California liberals say that the three-strikes law was not intended to punish a pizza thief as harshly as a murderer, bank robber or sex fiend.

They have a point. Some killers, robbers and fiends receive lighter sentences than 25 to life.

On the other hand, the sentence could be a step toward mending a glaring gap in our justice system. It is the question of what to do with jerks.

They are everywhere and they multiply faster than the general population.

We entered the Age of the Jerk sometime in the 1960s. That's when screamers decided they could dominate any public discussion, slobs decided that all the world was their litter box and droolers began forcing their boom box noise on innocent cars.

All you have to do is get out in rush-hour traffic. Within seconds a jerk will tailgate you, cut you off or white-knuckle merge at 5 mph in a high-speed zone.

Turn on your radio and hear the grunts and "ya knows" of the jerks who dominate the call-in shows.

Drive through some neighborhoods, and you get the inner-city strut from young men who slowly jaywalk and dare you to hit them so they can sue and ruin your life.

If your phone rings with a wrong number, it's likely that the person on the other end will get mad and blame you for his stupidity.



### Mike Royko

In a checkout line, the jerks wait until the entire order has been tabulated before slowly taking out his wallet or opening her purse.

So, basically, stealing a slice of pizza from children was the act of a jerk, not a criminal. Similar acts of jerkism are committed every day. And nothing happens to the hairy-browed perpetrators.

But now the word might go out, maybe on radio talk shows, where most jerk info is exchanged: "The jig is up, a jerk got 25 years to life."

Why not? Why should jerks get away with a lifelong commitment to shredding society's delicate fabric of common courtesy and civility? Why should society just heave a sigh when made miserable by these gap-toothed primates?

A bully who would steal a slice of pizza from children would talk loudly in a movie theater, pick his nose in a restaurant, blow black smoke out of his exhaust pipe and let his dog doo-doo on someone else's front lawn.

A few years ago, after a record-setting weekend of litter in Chicago's Lincoln Park, I made a simple proposal for teaching people not to litter.

A few of them would be seized and strung up by the neck on trees in the park. Their bodies would be left to dangle and decay with signs on their chests saying: "I Littered. Now I Am Dead. Mend Your Ways."

The bleeding hearts said I was sadistic. That's what they said more recently when I suggested that those who use their car stereos to jolt entire neighborhoods with the noise of cha-cha or rock music should have their ears sliced off and the ear canals filled with Krazy Glue.

Cruel and unusual punishment, the do-gooders said. OK, I'm not a monster. I'm open to compromise.

So on the first offense, maybe we cut off and plug only one ear. After that, we get tough.

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## Men can't know fear of rape

To know the evil of rape is to feel the violence of having yourself put at the mercy of another person. Few human experiences can be compared to it. To be enslaved is also to be at another's mercy. Perhaps slavery is the best comparison to rape. It may be the only thing to compare it to.

While trying to identify with what it must feel like to be raped or even to fear rape the way a woman might, I came to this conclusion: The most terrible thing that can happen to people is to have the control of their bodies taken away from them. Perhaps only slavery can compare to rape, but at the very best, slavery is a distant second to it.

Last week a man who was once convicted for raping a woman while holding a gun to the head of her 4-year-old child was sentenced again to prison for the torture rape of another woman. This second rape occurred eight months after his release from prison. The rapist had drugged the victim and repeatedly raped her over the course of several hours.

As I followed the news stories about this torture rape, I was also aware of a case in Omaha, in which another multiple rapist is currently on trial. The two cases stand out as examples of what could be a woman's greatest fear: A rapist going free and raping again.

As a man, I wondered how could I identify with what this kind of fear must feel like. Last week I had read a local news story about the torture rape trial, and a friend sitting next to me picked up the paper and began reading the same story. I watched her read and wondered what could be going through her mind. I figured



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she must have felt more sickened by it than I was, because she was a woman. It bothered me that somehow I may have been less affected than I expected her to be.

I was totally freaked out about what to say to her. At first I thought, "I've got to say something. But what if she's upset by the story?" While she read, I thought about what to do and say when she was finished. Her expression didn't change as she read, but I imagined that she must have been more than horrified. It seems as though women might experience some additional emotions about rape. In much the same way, blacks might feel additional emotions about slavery.

My friend continued to read while I tried to reason with the conflict of thinking I should feel differently because I'm a man. I know logically that there isn't any reason I should feel differently. It would seem that whenever a woman reads about a rapist offending again, the world closes in on them a little more each time.

For me, it became an issue about trying to identify with what women go through when they confront rape or hear about the rapists who repeat their crimes after serving time. This situation was doubly terrifying. Still, I feel less equipped to empathize

with the victimization of the crime.

What could be more terrible than to have that happen? I thought. Other than a rape itself, what does a man have to compare to it? How can a man identify with the feelings a woman must feel?

Is it naive to think that a man can't empathize with rape victims? Men are not raped as frequently, so what they draw from to deal with it can't be empathy. Or can it? Maybe it is naive. After all, rape can happen to anyone. But the violence of it can probably be felt more strongly by a woman. I guess that's where slavery comes in.

For me, it became a problem of identifying with being victimized. Blacks today have never been slaves, but they seem to feel more qualified to express the victimization of slavery.

Most men can't claim to know what it must feel like to be raped. In much the same way, most people can't really claim to know what it must feel like to be enslaved. I think blacks are trying say they feel "something" that is easier for them to feel than whites. I imagine it might be about the same for women to feel about rape.

Hopefully, members of both sexes are equally horrified and angered about rape. However, I imagine that, like blacks identifying with slavery, women would be even more able to identify with the evil and violence of rape than men. That is, of course, unless a man or someone close to him has been raped or unless he himself commits rape.

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### P.S. Write Back

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Mike Luckovich