

Hatred thrives, fails to shock

Hate. It's a popular word these days. The Omaha African-American community claims the police will retaliate out of hatred for those who killed Officer Jimmy Wilson Jr.

O.J. Simpson's attorneys say Mark Fuhrman manufactured evidence out of hatred for blacks. In both of these cases, the tragedies have been obscured due to underlying issues.

Hatred based on gender, sexual orientation, race, and religion is not new, yet both of these cases have brought it to the forefront. People across the country profess astonishment at a former policeman's utterance of racial epithets, but I have no doubt we could find them being used on our campus any day of the week.

Are we only aware of discrimination and hate speech when it involves someone well-known? I hope not, but the evidence seems to say so.

The hate speech we hear about is the rare instance in which someone brings forward a claim, goes to court, or appears in the public limelight. The average person insulted at the gym, in a restaurant, or even in a classroom rarely receives much attention.

Detective Fuhrman's actions are particularly loathsome, but not atypical. But it would ease our racist consciences to think he is.

I would propose that everyone is racist to some extent. Most people work hard to overcome that fact. But the circumstances in which people grow up and develop a value system vary, and not one of those circumstances has an airtight protection from hatred.

Most people overcome whatever negative beliefs they hold through experience and exposure to different cultures and ideas. But there is no guarantee of any one person accepting everything. Political



Kristi Schwarting

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correctness does not come naturally; it has been artificially imposed in an attempt to alleviate past injustices.

And its imposition does little to solve hatred and misunderstanding. Referring to someone by the politically correct term does not eliminate any prejudice existing inside.

While Fuhrman clearly missed the politically correct bus, his words shouldn't be so surprising. Most of us have witnessed something, some word or act, based on irrational bias.

I spent four years in a Southern city that claimed to be progressive. New Orleans residents had elected a black mayor, and my senior year the university saw its first black homecoming king and queen.

The very wording of newspaper articles — the "first" this or that — demonstrates how short a distance the city had in fact progressed. It shouldn't be so important to have elected someone who was black or gay or possessing of any other factor

considered "different." In a truly progressive society, these factors wouldn't carry so much weight.

Any notion of integration and acceptance fell to pieces in fall 1992, when David Duke nearly won the governor's race. The convicted white-collar criminal, Edwin Edwards, edged out the former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan.

What the Louisiana governor's race demonstrated was a community showing its best face to the world while keeping the ugliness inside. Duke's strongest voter base was an affluent New Orleans suburb, part of a town bursting with pride for its forward-thinking philosophy.

What interests me is the amount of hate I found in Nebraska when I returned last year. While I was away, I had somehow idealized my home state as a kinder, simpler place.

Instead, I came back to the state where Gary Lauck flourished. I don't know why he chose Nebraska as his home base, but something about it clearly appealed to him.

I came back to the state where Teena Brandon will be remembered less as a murder victim and more as a cross-dresser who happened to die.

Resistance to difference, be it color or sexual identity, perpetuates hatred. Such hatred is unlikely to end soon.

Against this backdrop, Fuhrman's remarks don't provoke as much shock. We cannot take someone who says such things seriously, but neither should we dismiss him as an eccentricity, a lone crackpot.

Hatred is alive and well and flourishing in America. Political correctness can't stop its growth. But an examination of what lies beneath the mask of propriety can.

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The N Stands For Knowledge

by James Zank

NEBRASKA SENATE RACE BEN BONG VERSUS STENZILLA



Leaving behind the Antichrist

Twilight, stars, souls. I sit in the dark knowing that hundreds of miles away there's a heartbeat; a heartbeat that prays for my death with every pulse. Old school, literally.

Proximity breeds friendship, distance brings hate; the golden rule that can be applied to any relationship. The endless quest to find warm bodies to surround ourselves with. You spin the chamber and take a chance, knowing that someday you'll wind up with a mouthful of bullets instead of warm air.

Thrown into the granite tomb of high school, you searched out comrades in arms desperately, forging alliances with the unlikeliest of nations. Disposable acquaintances, social cannon fodder — relationships built on mutual feelings of indifference. Healthy, good ol' fashioned teen-age crap.

One day a plague walked into our lives.

Typhoid, malaria, black death — child's play compared to the fate that awaited us. All around, shrieks of "Black Death!" could be heard over the scampering of feet on linoleum, but we stood our ground. I think we did it out of spite, the logic being that if everyone thinks it's bad, it must be good. However, every fledgling non-conformist must remember that sometimes the multitude has a point. Whether out of pity, pathos or a gestalt of the two, we dared to stare the demon in the face.

I don't know much, but I know the Antichrist when I see him.

He could have been in the Guinness Book for being universally despised. His body secreted some kind of reverse pheromone that caused people to contemplate suicide in His presence.

He was maddening. He was obnoxious, but what the hell, he was 16 and had a car.

You can hide a hickey, but you can't hide leprosy.

Like tolerating a rat gnawing at



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your Achilles' heel and then realizing it has become such a bloody, gunky mess that you can't pry it off, I grew a soft spot in my heart for his social deficiencies. It didn't even seem odd when, out of the blue, He confided in me that his family was genetically hairier than most. I grew to enjoy his insufferable company. We had the destructive, immature, mean-spirited, asinine fun that only 16-year-old penis-wielders can have and for that I am grateful, content, whatever.

Present tense. Now he wants me dead.

"You ruined my life," he says, but that's what we all say when we're not exactly sure what ruined our lives. Every action deserves a reaction. It's not my fault that my reflexes are just that, reflexes, and don't take into consideration the emotional repercussions of their backlash. Why do we become so upset upon discovering that the

people we dislike hate us too? Money is poison.

The intrusion waltzes into my life, I learn to like the thorn in my side, then he de-evolves back into the primordial goop. Just as he was becoming a human being he decides to once again look at the world through his crackeyes Viewmaster. Daddy's wallet bought him into the rich boy school where they teach 'em to drink and screw and other junior high rites of passage. The emotional cripple Olympics.

I remember his first call back from college, a tape-recorded dictation of his various partying exploits. Yawn. He had a prepared speech that he could spew out verbatim, so as not to deprive anyone on the juicy details. Super Yawn.

"Yeah, I drank and then I Rollerbladed, then...I drank, then, uh, I think my roommate had sex once, and I drank, then I went to somebody's house and, uh, drank...but I could be wrong, I was pretty drunk..." He looked like he was going to cry when it became apparent that Pavlovian drool wasn't dripping down my face to the tones of his vicarious beer and intercourse.

I grew up, he grew down. Telling myself that he came back more intolerable doesn't stop me from knowing that I'm the one who's different. Gone are my days of reigning Kristallnacht and screaming "Dirt!" while driving past the trailer park. West Omaha elitism doesn't get me off anymore. How could he know that?

Drinking, sex, drugs, and god...but I already covered that once, didn't I?

One of these days they're going to find my corpse carved out with a shotgun blast and the words, "From Russia With Love" spray painted on my chest, and who knows, maybe I deserve my death sentence.

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