

# Stepping off my soapbox

Buying my books earlier this semester, the bookstore cashier took my credit card, ran it through the register, and gave it a glance. She caught the name on the card and gave me a glare.

"Oh," she said, looking as if she had indigestion. "You're not going to write those awful little columns again this year, are you?"

"Go to hell," I thought.

Instead, I replied, "Uhhh, yes, ma'am. If it's alright with you, of course."

All I got for a response was a smirk — my welcome back, I guess. Being a columnist, even for a college newspaper, is a heady experience, and one I recommend to anyone with enough desire. But as illustrated above, it has its drawbacks.

In this job, you're hired to write what you think, loud and clear. You have to show guts and dish it out every now and then.

For three semesters, I've done that. And for it, I've taken my share of shots and gathered a fair amount of opposition — another bonus that comes with the job.

It's been rough: Not knowing exactly what to say about exactly who or what; not knowing if you're going to come off as intended; not knowing how far is too far.

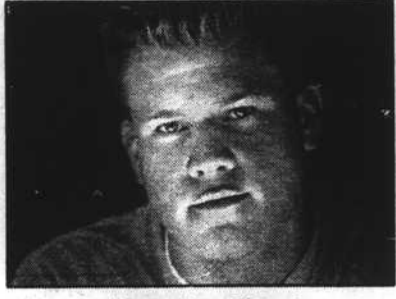
And after all the mental anguish and labor, you see your thoughts spilled onto newsprint, vulnerable to attack.

Funny thing is, I've enjoyed every minute of it.

I still remember thinking, after seeing one of my first columns in print, "What a country — where at 20 years of age, I can criticize the chancellor or slam the president, all in front of 25,000 readers. And no one, except my editor, can shut me up."

I've learned a lot since then; but it has been this writing that has done most of the teaching.

When I began my column, and



**Jamie Karl**

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took those first doses of criticism, it seemed to me as though nobody agreed on much anything and nobody cared much for one another.

Now I see that while certain issues have divided some of us, most people hold true the same basic beliefs and ideals. The gap isn't unsurpassable, and civilized discourse is possible.

But more than anything else, this experience has taught me about myself. Not until I began this column was I able to conscript the rational arguments of the mind to reinforce the emotions of the heart.

For all its hardships, this column has been good for me.

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I've taken up enough newsprint and wasted enough classroom discussion time. I've probably even over-stayed my welcome.

The decision to give up this podium I cherish and vocation I love is strictly my own. It comes not because of any outside pressure, but because of a sense of accomplishment.

For now, I've done what I set out to do. After three semesters, I've gotten a lot off my chest. Not bad for a guy who struggled to write a two-page literature paper in high school.

I would like to thank my editors at the Daily Nebraskan, who always allowed me the editorial freedom to write in my own style on issues I care deeply about. I thank them for their confidence in me, and for the continued opportunity.

Yet, I don't think they ever understood the message of my column. "Jamie, you're great for readership," is what they told me. And I guess I was a good drawing card.

I've never tried to speak for anyone but myself; but in doing so, the goal was to get everybody involved in the issues of our day.

What I've really learned from this column is that each of us has the right to speak, and that everyone needs to be heard now and then. Even that "silent majority."

That was the whole point. The job has been accomplished. And now, it's my turn to listen.

So if you'll excuse me, I will be signing off.

Wanna bet there is at least one happy cashier at the bookstore right now?

**Karl is a senior news-ed major, and was a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

# Simpson victory a hollow one

I'm afraid to go shopping. I'm afraid to go to the movies. I'm afraid to turn on the TV. I'm even afraid to eat at Burger King.

Normally, I'm as well adjusted as a graduate student can expect to be. But the O.J. Simpson case has gotten me down, ever since I heard the student mob outside the union sobbing for joy at the verdict.

I know I still can't expect to live in an O.J.-free world; I get flashbacks every morning when I sit down to drink my orange juice.

And I'm braced for more, now that Simpson is being lionized by the media.

When the O.J. knit cap and glove line comes out this Christmas, don't say I didn't warn you. When the Simpson cutlery line is released, remember that you read it here first. And when Burger King hypes its "O.J. jury glasses — buy one, or collect all twelve," feel free to publicly acknowledge me as a prophet.

While I was initially nauseated by the verdict, I have become more sympathetic to the reasons behind it. The Simpson trial carries with it several hundred years of cultural oppression. Mark Fuhrman is, after all, not a mutant — but your next door neighbor. One look at death row lets you know that Fuhrman is not just on the police force, but in the jury box as well. When a black man and a white man are both tried for murder, the black man usually gets death row, while the white man gets life imprisonment.

However, despite my sympathy with the verdict, I feel that the African-American community has a hard enough time shaking stereotypical images of the violent, abusive black male without reaching out and lionizing Simpson. While O.J. may be innocent of murder, he is guilty of domestic abuse. African-Americans may rejoice that they finally found someone with enough money and power to defeat the



**Debra Cumberland**

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white system, but their victory is a hollow one.

What has O.J. ever done for the black community? Yes, he did provide them with a dream. But once off the field, his dream was a white one. Unlike Muhammad Ali, Simpson appears to have had very little political consciousness, character, or convictions.

His success has been in the white world, surrounded by a white media, white friends, and white women. Some blacks may view his trial as an example of the tragedy of leaving the race, of falling for the symbols of white success — a black destroyed by marrying a white woman and a white world. Simpson emerges here as the ultimate victim: a successful black man undone by abandoning his people.

Ironically, while Cochran played the race card, few touched on the issue of domestic abuse, or interra-

cial marriage. If Nicole Brown Simpson were black, would that have changed anything? Considering the long list of black men who received media attention for alleged sex crimes — Clarence Thomas, Mike Tyson, Michael Jackson — will Nicole be perceived as simply another member of the white establishment out to get a successful black man?

I have no answers to these questions. I do know, however, that the Simpson case is no great victory for anyone, least of all Simpson, despite all the lionization and the media attention. Everyone has lost.

The "trial of the century" points out, once again, how both race and gender relations have deteriorated in this country in the past 10 years. But we don't want to see it.

It is no accident that Mark Fuhrman can succeed on the police force, or that police can beat Rodney King, when we are systematically dismantling 30 years of civil rights legislation. It is no coincidence that domestic abuse can be swept under the rug when abortion clinics and abortion rights are routinely attacked. The two are connected, whether we want to believe it or not.

Glamour, power and money lie at the heart of the Simpson case, just as they lie at the heart of the white, all-American dream, and at the heart of Simpson's abusive marriage. We still love that dream. That's why some people have welcomed Simpson back, and view Christopher Darden, the black prosecutor, as a racial turncoat.

Until we see the hollowness and hypocrisy at the heart of Simpson's — and the American — dream, we will never be able to defeat the cycle of racism and domestic abuse that is slowly destroying this country.

**Cumberland is a graduate student in English and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

**...doomed to repeat it.**  
**Oct. 25, 1962**  
**Armageddon makes exams look easy**

**Feel stressed at midterm? Just think how bad our forbears had it — trudging barefoot through drifts of snow in the blazing heat, six miles to school and back. Uphill, of course — both ways.**

**Lest we forget how bad they really had it, let's also recall the not-too-long-ago threat of annihilation that graced our midterm brows with worry marks that have yet to fade, entirely, away.**

**October 1962 was a very good season for nuclear missiles in Cuba. It was a bumper-crop year in America for witch-hunters, too (keep an ear peeled for political back-pedaling in what follows.)**

**And if you made it through the night, Vietnam loomed just beyond the horizon.**

**Trick or treat!**

"We have reached definitely and finally the point of no return," said Dr. Roberto Esquenazi-Mayo, Cuban born professor of romance languages, at a Nebraska State Education Association meeting yesterday.

The U.S. has decided it is time to stop Russian policies not only in Cuba but in the Western Hemisphere, he said.

"In my opinion, Kennedy's program, to stop, search or sink any boat, no matter what nationality, that approaches Cuban shores, must be complied with.

"No one knows what will happen," he said. "We may be, in a few hours, involved in an atomic war. May God give all of us understanding so we can live peacefully."

The American foreign policy was not what it should have been, he said. Cubans have criticized it, but there is not time now for accusations or counteraccusations.

"Some people argued whether Kennedy's action was a moral action or not," he said. His answer to this was that "It takes a great deal of moral courage for a great power to admit that they have made mistakes in foreign policy. Castro has never shown any interest in submitting any of his policies to any referendum.

"The missiles in Cuba are a present threat to the U.S. Kennedy is not only concerned with the defense of Cuba but with the national security of the U.S. too."

Explaining the Cubans' side of the situation, Dr. Esquenazi stressed that anyone who says Cuba is with Castro is either a fellow troublemaker or is ignorant of the Cuban situation. He explained that Castro has betrayed the Cuban revolution — the same determination that was shown against Batista is now being shown against Castro.

"No one knew at the time of the revolution that Castro, although he was a rebel rouser in college, was

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going to lead them into communism. No one would have supported him if they had known. He had stated, while he was in Sierra Maestra, that he wasn't a communist and that he didn't have any communist infiltration."

"But," continued Dr. Esquenazi, "something happened to him. Slowly and quietly, communism took over with his agreement."

**Revolution**  
 Castro knew that the U.S. was behind him. The revolution was planned in New York and money to support it came from New York, New Orleans and several other American places, he said.

Batista was at least as bad as Castro, said Dr. Esquenazi. The Cubans do not want to get Batista back, but want to get something better. If they had known what Castro was they would have destroyed him, but not the revolution.

The Cubans are behind the U.S. policy and so are the other Latin American countries, he said. They don't feel that the U.S. is intruding.

"This is not a unilateral intervention, but a multilateral," he continued.

"I am against unilateral intervention in the internal affairs of any Latin American nation, but this is not a conflict between two internal parties, but is part of the communist plan for world domination."

**Reconquer Cuba**  
 "For those who claim that the U.S. has abused its power, let me point out that the Cubans all over New York, Florida, etc. have volunteered to fight in their homeland because they want to reconquer whatever is left in Cuba after Castro is gone.

"They sing their national anthem, 'to die for one's country is to live.'" They believe it, he stated.

The U.S. and Cuba have made mistakes, he admitted. The Cubans are paying for them now and who knows how much they will have to pay if Castro is victorious. Many have paid with their lives.

"I shiver with horror at the possibility of what may happen when the two boats meet. I don't know, no one does, but definitely and finally the U.S. has made very clear her position," he said.

"The Cubans do differ in many of their opinions, but they are united in the idea that their differences will make no difference if Castro remains," he concluded.

**BE OUR GUEST**  
 The Daily Nebraskan will present a guest columnist each Monday. Writers from the university and community are welcome. Must have strong writing skills and something to say. Contact Mark Baldrige c/o the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588. Or by phone at (402)-472-1782.