

Penny-pinching

Student stretches every dollar, just like dad

I was doing something I never thought I would be forced to do ... I was going to use a coupon at Taco Bell.

Yes, at the place where you could feed a small Ethiopian village with a sweaty twenty, I was going to use a coupon.

I thought back to what could have possibly driven me to this lack-of-funds desperation.

Now the worst fear of a 13-year-old is not that he'll one day be forced to dress in drag and sing "Like a Virgin" in front of a retirement home. He knows nothing about "pledging," although this will be his worst fear at a later time.

No, a 13-year-old's worst fear is that he'll grow up to be like his father. It is at this tender age when everything you do has to look "cool" and it is suddenly realized that, well, dad isn't.

I was 13 when I realized that I didn't want to grow up to be like my father. The sole basis was his obsession with ... coupons.

Dad possessed what I called "the box." It was a big tan box that contained thousands upon thousands of coupons. So obsessive was my father with it, that he would never leave the grocery cart alone, fearing someone might run off with "the box."

Now I'm 19 and my deepest fear has come true — I have become my father.

I have been faced with the same numb reality that confronts many college students: A dwindling personal budget that leaves me picking up pennies, no matter what side is showing.

Yes, I stood in line at Taco Bell and yes, I used a coupon there. I saved 89 cents (sales tax included) and yes, that 89 cents mattered! Why? Because at the end of the month, it may come down to that 89



Kasey Kerber

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cents. Then I can laugh and say "Well, guess I'm glad I used that Taco Bell coupon after all!"

To think I used to make fun of my father when he sat at the kitchen table on Sunday mornings, clipping coupons for hours on end. Now I'm running around like a politician on election day just trying to find a Sunday paper.

Yet clipping coupons is not the only way to make personal funds go the extra 89 cents (with sales tax!). Another way to make money last is in the dating area.

Quick question to all the ladies: Know how you always say that childbirth is the most painful experience in the world and that men will never know the meaning of such misery?

Well, next time you go out on a

date with a guy, take a close look at his face when the price rings for two movie tickets, two medium drinks, a large tub of popcorn and a box of Junior Mints.

You may only see it for a moment — a slight sucking in of the breath or possibly flaring of the nostrils. I guarantee it, though — there's pain there when a guy comes to the realization that he'll pretty much be handing over his entire wallet.

Guys counter this by urging dates to go to Starship 9. Pay no heed that it often plays such quality hits as "The Big Green" or "Babe" for weeks on end — it's a buck-fifty per ticket.

Women counter being taken to Starship by begging their "guy" to buy them a little something, like a box of Junior Mints. The guy gives in, not fully knowing that she will eat every damn mint and aggressively hit him with the half open box when he tries to take one.

But that's dating, bizarre even when it comes to something as simple as money.

Certainly all ways for student penny-pinching have not been examined. You see, many methods of making the buck last are illegal.

Not-precisely-legal means range from trying to stuff food into your "refillable" drink cup at the food service building to selling your soul to Columbia House under three different names.

So whatever your means are of making your personal budget last, just remember: Pride is optional, Van Damme is a buck-fifty, Junior Mints are sweet revenge and 89 cents might mean the difference between life and death (with sales tax).

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O.J.'s trials become America's troubles



Matt Woody

If you're like me, your television was one of the three million or so that were tuned into the BET network last Wednesday night.

It was, of course, O.J. Simpson's first interview since he was acquitted of charges of killing his ex-wife and her friend, Ronald Goldman.

Forget "Friends" and "ER." This news junkie had his own must-see TV.

The interview, conducted by Black Entertainment Television anchor Ed Gordon, provided little surprise. Simpson maintained his complete innocence, talked about his readjustment to life on the outside and expressed anger toward the media, which he said misrepresented nearly everything about the trial and his life since.

But what caught me off guard was nothing from that hour-long interview, but something that was revealed in the days leading up to and following it.

Once again, O.J. Simpson showed just how wide the racial divide is in America.

As the trial carried on, polls showed that one-half to two-thirds of blacks believed Simpson innocent of the murders, while as little as 25 percent of the white population thought the same.

Last week, much of white America collectively snickered when it learned Simpson's interview would be on BET. "The black channel" would go easy on Simpson, so the thinking went. I nearly was ashamed to be white.

Thankfully, BET's Gordon put any such notions to rest with a serious interview, complete with hardball questions. Simpson may not have answered some of the tough ones, telling viewers to buy his video, but it didn't stop Gordon from asking Simpson if he committed the murders, just what he was doing to find the real killers and, repeatedly, exactly what he was doing just before limo driver Allan Park arrived at his Brentwood home.

After the interview, TV talk shows were again abuzz with talk of Simpson. One white audience member on CNN's "America's Talking" was quite disturbed that the interview took place on BET and not on NBC or CNN or some other network that she must have believed to be more legitimate. In the discussion, this audience member said, "I'm not a racist," adding that she thought O.J. was innocent, as if the two were mutually exclusive.

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Regardless, most of the whites who were skeptical of the interview do believe Simpson killed his ex-wife and Ronald Goldman. They cling to an equally racist notion that the mostly black jury found Simpson not guilty because he was black or to send some message to the Los Angeles authorities.

If race is such a factor, why then didn't the two whites on the panel insist on convicting Simpson, thereby deadlocking the jury?

That brings up even more questions and "logic" that have no place in 1996 America.

Once thing is certain — we must take notice of the gap between blacks and whites.

Blacks in America have a far different view of police than do whites. Being cognizant of this fact — had I been a juror — I would have needed a flawless case from prosecutors to keep me from finding reasonable doubt. And when one of the lead detectives on the case was a flat-out racist who talked of how easy it would be to plant evidence, that's far from flawless.

In the eyes of the law, Simpson is an innocent man. He deserves a chance to get on with his life, whether people want to give him one or not.

As Simpson said the other night, people didn't raise a fuss when Stacey Koon, one of the LAPD officers who beat Rodney King, received millions of dollars for writing a book.

Apparently, if a white man is convicted of violently beating a black, he can earn a living how he wants. But if a black is acquitted of killing two whites, then all bets are off.

That's how it looks when one uses the same thinking that floated around so freely last week.

Maybe whites are bothered, perhaps only subconsciously, that the victims were white and Simpson, the supposed killer, is black.

The whole situation is troubling. But this country can't heal and begin to close the racial divide until Simpson is allowed to get on with his life and provide for his children.

Woody is a senior news-editorial major and a guest columnist.

Ab-or-tion

As ugly as it sounds, let women choose

Two Saturdays ago, right before the anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, more than 2,000 anti-abortion demonstrators headed from the Capitol to the Federal Building on 10th Street. These obviously dedicated demonstrators did their part to keep the abortion issue in the spotlight.

They have many supporters, including Ben Nelson. The Nebraska law banning Medicaid from paying for abortions caused by rape or incest was declared unconstitutional recently. Yet our faithful public servant declares that he will keep fighting this decision. It's the principle of the thing.

And a grand principle it is. Abortion is an ugly word, with ugly connotations: A vacuum coldly sucking the life and the soul out of a woman and killing the innocent young life inside her. The fetus, a miraculous creation of God, was made from the combination of two separate people's DNA. Without that intimacy, that act of love, the formation of another person could not occur.

As it was meant to be, pregnancy is a wonderful event from the conception to the anticipation of birth. Labor isn't so great, but the pain is soon forgotten as the mother holds the newborn in her arms and Daddy proudly looks at the new addition to the family. It is truly an act of love.

But the Medicaid ban does not uphold these high ideals. First of all, the Medicaid recipient is not financially independent. Most cannot pay for their own abortions if they so desire. This means that the government is using the poor and the helpless as an example. Free will is an important issue in the decision of a mother to have her child. If that is not present, then what dedication does the mother have to that child? Forcing people to do anything against their will inevitably leads to a breakdown somewhere.



Kristl Kohl

"Abortion isn't an easy decision for anyone to make. But giving women the option of a clinical abortion gives us more of a voice in our futures."

But the initial problem is intensified by the manner of conception. In cases of rape or incest, it takes a very forgiving and strong woman to love the baby that is half the man that hurt her. The event has been a violation from the start, and it is hard to think of it as wonderful. Morning sickness and the woman's growing stomach would only be physical symbols of the violation that occurred. The woman would have to deal with the emotional hormonal changes as well as the emotional trauma of the rape or incest.

In cases like these, abortion is a viable solution. Not all women in these cases will choose it for different reasons. But it should be available — not only in concept, but in practice. This means that the women who can least afford to have a baby should have this option as well. This means allowing Medicaid to pay for those abortions that

happen by this means.

Abortion isn't an easy decision for anyone to make. But giving women the option of a clinical abortion gives us more of a voice in our futures. Why? In the event of an unplanned and unwanted pregnancy, abortion crosses the mind at least once. If the conditions are unsafe, then that isn't a choice. The prospect of having an abortion forces a woman to think about more perspectives and gives her a concrete goal to work for. If abortion isn't an option, she would be less prepared to become a parent because she hasn't had to make an active decision in the pregnancy.

Parenthood is demanding. From the beginning, a tiny, helpless baby is a big responsibility. For the first month, it's often an around-the-clock job. It can be exhausting, especially for single parents who can't trade shifts while the other sleeps. And, don't forget, the mother has just undergone probably the most excruciating ordeal of her life so far.

If the love for the newborn baby and the responsibility for caring for him or her aren't present, then that will lead to problems down the road. Child abuse and neglect are major social problems that still occur. It's a vicious cycle that will lead to another generation of neglectful parents if we're not careful.

Finally, the "right-to-life" and "pro-choice" mottos are not mutually exclusive. I don't think that anyone would advocate abortion as the best thing to do in most circumstances. Many women have chosen to have their babies. Making this conscious decision to love and protect their child is part of the process of becoming a responsible and caring parent. Let's not try to choose for them.

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