

An unlucky number

Friday the 13th brings out a weekend's worst



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"If it weren't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all. Deep dark depression, excessive misery." — Hee Haw

As if Friday the 13th weren't enough, a black cat crossed my path as I walked under a ladder.

And I wasn't wearing clean underwear.

(Point of clarification: My Donald Duck boxers were clean until I smacked the mirror repair truck.)

Needless to say, I was a tad unlucky this weekend.

Yeah, and Big 12 refs were a tad nearsighted.

So, against the advice of my therapist, let's take a stumble down fuzzy-memory lane.

Friday the 13th: It started out when my roommate failed to tell me the hot water heater was broken.

However, my shrieking from the shower seemed to jog his memory.

While waiting for certain body parts to redescend, I realized I was going to be late for class.

It was in my haste that I took out the Harmon Glass truck. What the hell he was doing on the sidewalk, I'll never figure out. By the way, what is seven years times 56 mirrors anyway?

Then I decided I'd be better off riding out the storm at home.

Little did I know, but my roommate was holding a meeting of the

Regional Amway Distributing, Jehovah's Witnessing, Insurance Selling, Outlaw Biker Chemical Engineers against bathing club. Sioux City division.

On top of all that the cable was out.

Out — except for QVC. QVC during porcelain figurine day.

Porcelain figurines of Andy Rooney.

Depicting various scenes from Leave it to Beaver.

Next up: The Delta Burke Collection.

After rappelling down from my balcony, I hauled ass to the nearest theater.

In my quest to be alone, I asked for a ticket to the emptiest show they had. I really need to learn to watch my mouth.

The error of my ways became painfully obvious when "Beloved" started. I tried to escape, but the doors were stuck shut from built-up Diet Coke and used Kleenex.

It is an Oprah film, you know.

There I witnessed the most frightening thing I've seen since Ron Kirtenboch on a triple espresso.

Oprah in a sex scene. AAAAAAHHHHHHHHH-HH!

Saturday the 14th: I was freed from the theater around noon. Theater management figured that I had spent the equivalent of 6½ showings in there.

Naturally, they charged me for it. But I hear that tripled weekend revenues for the film. You're welcome, Oprah.

Thank goodness the opinion-editorial party was that night. God knows I needed a drink.

(Which I didn't get. I was driving. Talk about your poor plan-

ning.)
When I got there (after one wrong building and two wrong apartments) I found that one columnist had brought 13 of his

groupies. Things started to get really ugly when one got her bee-hive hair-do caught in the ceiling fan.

As she spun around, her stiletto

JD.
Some of it got spilled on a columnist who accused me of trying to set her on fire.

I was just trying to get her drunk, not flammable. Some people just don't understand.

Things started getting really creepy when the Philosophical Columnist began hallucinating after playing video games.

"No, don't shoot him. No. Hoop scoop da poop. Hey man, there are places here."

When the fight broke out between Col. GOP and The One Democrat Female Clinton Hasn't Hit On, I thought it might be time to go.

Good thing I didn't. I still had yet to witness the Chief squirming along the floor like a worm because his limbs wouldn't work.

(Opinion editor's note: Dammit, those legs of mine had gone gelatinous by that point, and I'm standing, or rather crawling, by that theory!)

Finally, there was the Mellow Columnist who was utterly fascinated by CD covers. "Whoa, pretty colors man," which took him approximately fifteen minutes to say. Seriously.

I casually slipped out and made my way home. The party there had broken up. Unfortunately, my collection of Sad Elvis Clowns had also been broken up.

Sunday: Screw you. I'm staying in bed and watching "Friends" videos all day.

What the ... All right, who the hell taped over my "Friends" videos? Aw no ... It can't be ... It's not ... It is.

"Barney Meets the Care Bears, Part VII": "I Love You, We Love You, Everyone Loves You. Except That Grad Student Over There. He Loves Everyone."

"Gloom, despair and agony on me."



DEB LEE/DN

heals hit one of the five bottles of Jack Daniels at the party, sending it flying directly at yours truly. And I don't even like

The wrong idea

Public perception of Palestinians riddled with misinformation



CLIFF HICKS is a senior news-editorial and English major and the Daily Nebraskan opinion editor.

What was originally supposed to be a discussion about the movie "The Siege" rapidly advanced into a lesson on Palestine history when I spoke with my Palestinian friend last week.

See, I have a very close friend, whom we'll call "Bela Isim," who has spent the majority of his summers in Israel. This hasn't been easy for him, though, because he's, well, Palestinian. Over the past few years, we have slowly begun to see recognition of Palestine, though not as an independent state yet.

According to the 1997 World Almanac, it was A.D. 636 when the Arabs invaded and conquered Palestine, which had existed long before. But things start for my purposes anyway, in 1948. In 1948, Britain and France moved out of Palestine, expelled the country, forced Palestinians into exile and created Israel for the Jewish people of the world.

Here's where my opinions start getting into trouble.

The Palestinians had their country

destroyed, had hundreds of villages leveled and were turned into a nomadic people by the British.

"For as long as there were maps," Bela Isim told me, "there was Palestine."

A country that had existed in one state or another for over a thousand years was broken down and torn asunder by countries who had no real authority other than "might makes right."

In its place, another country was erected: Israel.

Israel has existed less than peacefully during its 50 years. It has been in arguments with all of its neighbors.

Its harsh tactics when dealing with Palestinians caused the formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which is led by a revolutionary who is more well-known than most, Yasser Arafat.

The PLO has fought for many years to re-establish the country of Palestine. It wasn't until recently that they began to get a real foothold on reestablishment. The Palestinians aren't allowed to call it a "state" — it is merely an "entity" within Israel.

Which leads me back to "The Siege."

I went and saw this film with little history on the conflict, and so I tended to perceive it with the same wide eyes as most moviegoers. For those of you unfamiliar with the movie, the premise is that terrorists start to cause panic in New York by blowing up people. First it's a bus, then more.

Under panic and the demand of the people of New York, martial law is declared, and the army moves in. They round up all Arab males aged 13 and

older. The abuse of Arabs gets only worse from there.

A couple of things really stood out about the movie, which is why Bela Isim and I had our talk. The first was that the terrorists were portrayed as Palestinians. They wore the traditional white-and-black-checked scarves of the Palestinian people.

I asked Bela Isim about it, because terrorism as a concept has always disturbed me, as I think it has most Americans. This is what he told me:

"Having the U.S. act as a sort of police in our country is going to cause hostility. I think it's a reaction to that. (Terrorism) certainly shouldn't be the first option, and it necessarily isn't the best option. It's a lashing out. The object is to make them feel raped and hurt, like we do," he said. "That goes for all Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia."

After listening to Bela Isim, it started to make sense to me. I mean, I'd always really known deep down why terrorists hit the public — I think I just didn't want to admit it to myself. The problem is that the military is too heavily guarded. Like in guerrilla warfare, you hit what you can get at, because opportunities can be very rare.

Another thing that bothered me about the movie was that the FBI detains a man for having money hidden in the bottom of his suitcase. He says this money is a dowry. The FBI finds this suspicious.

Bela Isim assured me that dowries are still very common among Arab culture.

"It's the same as when an American gives his daughter or son a wedding

present. It's to help them get started in their new life."

So, as a concept, carrying a dowry into a country isn't that unbelievable. As for it being hidden, Bela Isim told me stories of carrying his money concealed on or in all sorts of things, because he was afraid of corrupt security forces detaining him and "acquiring" some of that money.

The parallels he and I drew between the FBI and the Mukhabarat Arab security forces were a little more eerie than I was personally prepared for.

He told me the man detained in the movie "used the word Mukhabarat to describe the security forces following him. But that word doesn't really mean internal security. Where we come from, Mukhabarat are spies, people watching their neighbors, people who can't be trusted. They don't have to live by the same rules as the rest of us. If you're not afraid of the Mukhabarat, you don't know what they are or you are a fool."

It's funny, but that's often how I kind of picture the FBI.

Now, I have a great deal of respect for FBI agents and most of the work they do.

But people leave from foreign countries to come to a place they believe is safer, with less abuse of power, fewer problems, less secret police and more freedom. And what we offer them isn't always what they're expecting. Maybe this is an example of the FBI being portrayed unrealistically for movie license, or maybe we need to keep a closer eye on what America's quiet guards are doing.

Bela Isim also made a very good point that stuck with me long past our

conversation.

"If the writer had called for a group of Jewish terrorists, let's say they were unhappy with the United State's "aid" of the peace process, this movie would never have been made. The film would have been shut down before Denzel Washington and Bruce Willis even heard of it."

There still isn't a lead Arab actor I can name off the top of my head. The same is true for Asian actors as well (not including those from Hong Kong). Hollywood still hasn't really begun to reflect what the rest of the world does.

And the peace process and conflict between Palestine and Israel is far from over.

Bela Isim told me it would be "nice to have peaceful coexistence, but that means they still live on our lands."

It's not a problem that's going to go away, and films like "The Siege" that use thoughtless stereotypes aren't going to help smooth out the problems.

Like a lot of the things I've been thinking about lately, I don't have any answers. At least the peace process has begun and things are, albeit slowly, starting to moving towards an eventual resolution of some sort.

My friend did ask, however, that he get the last word here.

"Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah and his blessings."

"Bela Isim" means "without name," and we spoke under condition of anonymity so that he would not suffer repercussions from his comments. So, my thanks to him, my good friend, for spending so much time in getting this column well-based. His assistance was invaluable.