

# Risky business

Try something new and scary during the upcoming year



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My final project in acting class this semester is a love scene. It's not a physical love scene, per se, but there will probably be some hand-holding. In fact, this scene pretty much runs the gamut of human emotion. Verbally, it's quite passionate.

It's with another woman.

Yup, I play Gertrude Stein's girlfriend. Her name was Alice, by the way, and you've probably never heard of her. I hadn't either. Ignorantly enough, I wasn't even aware Stein was a lesbian.

I'm feeling pretty ashamed that I'm so unenlightened about such an important American writer. Mostly what I'm feeling ashamed about, though, is the fact that doing this scene makes me nervous.

By all means, I'm not homophobic. Quite a few of my friends are gay or bi, and I'm comfortable with it. But something inside is not letting me be at ease with assuming this fictional identity, even if it's for only a couple of weeks.

The thing is, I don't have to do this scene. My scene partner chose it, and I agreed it would be a good one to perform, so I'm going to perform it with her. Even though it's only one five-minute scene in what hopefully will be a full acting career, it may be one of the most important things I do.

See, I'm taking a major personal risk.

This may not seem like a big deal to anyone else (with the exception of my scene partner), but it's a big risk for me. Once I force myself to do this one uncomfortable thing, I'll be able to do so much more.

I'm officially making myself move out of my comfort zone. I'm "thinking outside of the box." (P.S.: Thanks for that over-used phrase should go to UNL's own Residential Education.) I'm trying something I'm not used to. No, I'll rephrase that. I'm forcing myself to do something I'm not used to.

I rock.

Because I'm taking a risk, I think that this can technically be called risky behavior. But it won't be, because "risky behavior" alludes to things like having unprotected sex or driving your car on the wrong side of the road. (I prefer to call that "asinine behavior," by the way.)

When we were young, our parents and teachers and everyone else we were wise to fear told us not to engage in risky behavior. And we were fine with that. They were protecting us from getting into trouble, plain and simple. But now that we're here and pretty much independent, we can change the meaning of that phrase if we want to.

I want to.

I'd like to see the purely negative connotation disappear. I'd like to see students and the rest of the world start taking more risks.

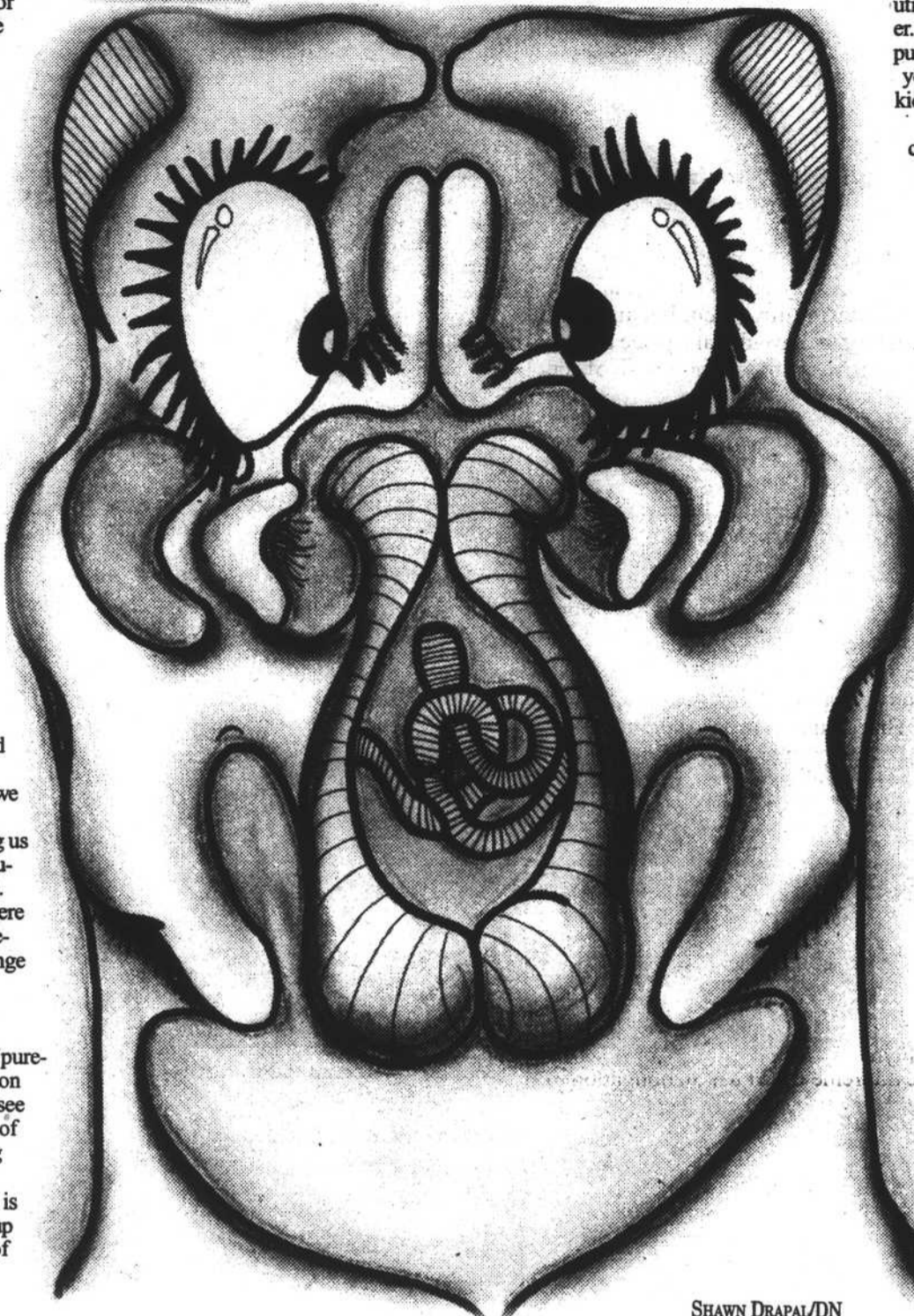
Now people, this is prime time to bring up the concept the rest of the world calls good ol' common sense.

(Side note: The

phrase "good ol' common sense" is most fun and effective when said with

a deep Southern accent.)

Playing Marco Polo on the inter-



SHAWN DRAPAL/DN

state or volunteering to be the tackle dummy for the football team, for example, are good demonstrations of utilizing no common sense whatsoever. You can take personal risks without putting your health, your sanity and/or your life in jeopardy. Really, I'm not kidding here.

Getting out of your comfort zone can mean taking a class that makes you nervous, going to a sushi bar, attempting a jump on your snowboard or joining the Peace Corps. It all depends on where you want to go with your life. What may seem insignificant to your roommate could be the most radical thing you've ever done. Guess what? It's time to do it.

No, really. Make it your New Year's resolution to put your butt on the line. Take a major personal risk. Make it absolutely imperative to do something you've never done before — something that gives you genuine butterflies in your stomach when you think about it. It'll feel great when you finally attempt it.

(Disclaimer: If your personal risk is riding the Mamba at Worlds of Fun and you subsequently throw up, you will not feel great about attempting it initially. You may not blame the author of this column. Sorry.)

Make 1999 the year you try something you've never done before. And someday, you can look back on your moment of glory and say, "Man, I really bit the bullet and did it, didn't I? I am a bad-ass! Woo-hoo!"

I myself plan to try artichokes and mouth off to some professors. Oh wait, I already did that this year. Hmm, OK, how about this: I'm going to move off campus, become almost financially responsible and learn how to change the oil in my car.

Sushi can wait 'til the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## The right to choose ignorance

Abortion protesters picked the wrong place at the wrong time



**TIM SULLIVAN is a third-year law student and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

Have you ever had the experience of visiting a Planned Parenthood clinic?

Maybe asking you that question made you uncomfortable.

Very uncomfortable.

Perhaps that's because your girlfriend went there, without you. Maybe she went there because she was pregnant.

If she went there because she was pregnant, the chances are good she went there to inquire about getting an abortion.

Maybe that's the source of your discomfort. Maybe you feel some guilt as a result of being a part of that.

You didn't go with her (maybe you did, but there are probably still some guilty feelings associated with it), but you were largely responsible

for the necessity of the visit.

But maybe you went there for something else. And then again, maybe she went there for something else, but alone. Without you.

She could have gone there for an examination for birth control pills. Or a rubella test for a marriage license. Or maybe just a pap smear.

Whatever her reason for going there, she made the decision.

She may have made that decision because you didn't give her the kind of support she needed at a critical time in her life — that is, if she went there to get an abortion.

But then again, it could have been your refusal to practice safe sex, as in using a condom. Hence the need for the birth control pills.

Did you know Lincoln has two Planned Parenthood clinics?

One of them is on O Street. The other is on South Street.

If she went to the O Street clinic, she wasn't there to get an abortion.

That's because they don't perform them there. They perform them only at the South Street location.

I recently accompanied a friend to the O Street Planned Parenthood location for an examination for birth control pills.

As we approached the entrance, I noticed a small group of people (three, to be exact) across the street, on the corner in front of OfficeMax.

They were holding up signs, fac-

ing the direction of the Planned Parenthood clinic. The signs bore messages indicative of their pro-life, anti-abortion views.

As I sat waiting for my friend, I wondered how the protesters across the street made her feel as she entered the clinic, seeking only a means to prevent an unwanted pregnancy.

I also thought about the faithful parishioners of Westminster Church, who go there to worship peacefully, only to endure the harassment of pro-lifers because Dr. Winston Crabb, a well-known abortion practitioner here in Lincoln, attends their church.

Not everyone is ready or able to be a parent, I thought. Many of us, while we may want to raise children someday, find ourselves in positions in our lives that would make parenthood impractical or unwise.

If it's true that becoming a parent would be a poor decision for some of us at certain points in our lives, it must be equally true that to do so at such a point in our lives would not be in the best interests of the child who would be so irresponsibly brought into this world.

So it strikes me that women who use the pill for birth control are acting responsibly.

And the protesters across the street shouldn't have anything to bitch about.

There they stood, protesting against abortion at a Planned Parenthood clinic where no abortions occur.

The women seeking the services of the O Street clinic, it seems to me, are trying to make sure they don't find themselves in the position those protesters are so concerned about.

By taking measures to prevent unwanted pregnancies, they aren't subjecting themselves or anyone else to being faced with the decision of whether or not to abort a pregnancy.

But those protesters don't believe that she or anyone else ought to be able to make that decision.

I know that abortion is a social issue on which the citizens of this country may never be able to reach a consensus.

But this country was founded on a rule of law. That means we are governed by laws, not by men.

Perhaps they don't remember Roe v. Wade.

That landmark Supreme Court case made it clear that the law in this country says the woman, up to a certain point, has the right to choose.

What do I think of that decision? I think it was a good one. I think the woman should always have the final say when it comes to her own body.

If she is not ready to be a mother to the child she carries, for whatever reason, she should be able to termi-

nate that pregnancy.

Someone told me if I expressed my pro-choice views publicly in this column, pro-lifers might add my name to their lists of pro-choicers that pro-life advocates with violent tendencies would use for the purpose of hunting me down and hurting me.

Lord knows, they've hurt (and killed) a lot of people in furthering their cause.

One of the Web sites for pro-lifers I found has a page that pro-life advocates can go to for the purpose of signing a nonviolence pledge.

Imagine that. An organization dedicated so fervently to the preservation of life, yet so violent (and deadly).

I have no problem with the free expression of speech. The protesters who were picketing the O Street clinic the day I was there with my friend were exercising a right I personally cherish.

But I still have to question their wisdom. Are they stupid, or what?

Why protest abortions at a clinic where none occur?

And, in so doing, why harass innocent women who are there merely to help prevent the thing they're so concerned about in the first place?

Pro-lifers have the same right to freedom of speech as I do.

But maybe they ought to think about how (and where) to exercise it in an intelligent manner.