

OPINION PAGES

Our VIEW

Bad news bearers

Television's handling of shooting irresponsible

As in any profession, the media contains both good and bad professionals. Never is this more evident than in the wake of a national disaster. While some reporters, editors, owners and producers have responsibly covered the Littleton, Colo., shooting, many national television news outlets have given the collective media another jolly good black eye.

In fact, the television coverage of the Littleton school shooting reads like a bad journalism how-to manual, replete with glorifying mass murderers, rampant editorializing and sensationalizing a crime that would attract international attention without the extra hype.

And it is television that's to blame. Newspapers are a much more rational news medium — day-after-the-event printed pages that encourage in-depth analysis instead of purely emotional reactions provoked by quick-changing photos and instant sound bites from the tube.

Television's guilt could grow heavier yet if two different facets of the school shooting news coverage ensure such tragedy repeats itself.

First, the networks are fighting for ratings using the scum of society — a couple of angst-soaked teen racists and mass murderers. In this fight, television has glorified the very scum it sought to vilify.

The two teens' photos and homes get flashed across the screen. Every element of the duo's lives — what music they listened to, what video games they played, what they wore to school — gets analyzed over and over again. And, somehow, the fact that the two were widely known Nazi enthusiasts whose hate was tolerated by parents, classmates, friends and teachers and the fact that they planned a hate crime against minorities have been shoved aside.

So the duo who were outcast nobodies in high school have achieved national fame post-mortem thanks to their killing rampage.

Outcast teens in other states already have adopted the black trenchcoat garb and threatened their teachers with "another Colorado." Scariest yet: The killers' notoriety, courtesy of the television media, is a dream for suicidal outcasts who ponder how folks will miss them and remember them when they're gone.

Second, the media have editorialized at every turn — asking leading questions and pointing fingers. One question we heard: "Don't you think it's ironic that teens were praying together during the ordeal, although prayer in schools is forbidden? Even though wearing a T-shirt that reads 'I hate people' isn't forbidden?" Thus, the separation of church and state becomes as much a culprit as the teens' clothes, music and gory video games. It seems everything and everyone is responsible for the teens' behavior, with the exception of the teens themselves.

Hate fuels hate. Let's hope irresponsible television hype and the glorification of the killers hasn't poured gasoline on the school-shooting fire.

Neal's VIEW

THE BROYHILL FOUNTAIN: AN ANALOGY.



Unforgettable ...

Dorm life makes permanent mark in college



KASEY KERBER is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Those of you who have seen my mug shot this semester probably realize that most of the time there's a residence hall-related column that goes along with it.

That's because I'm living out my fourth year in the halls, three at Pound and one at Harper.

But next year I'll be saying goodbye to the dorms. There's a nice one-bedroom apartment with my name on it, and it has guaranteed parking, no one blasting music a few doors down and drinking a beer will actually be legal again.

So, with perhaps my final column as a DN columnist, I'd like to say farewell to the residence halls. ...

Thanks for the good times, whether they be with intramurals, floor events, government events or the entertaining cast of characters I see on a daily basis.

No thanks for the "Dorm/Residence Hall" argument. Let me be the first to go on record saying that I don't give a damn what you call it — a dorm or a residence hall. One term isn't right or wrong. And taking the time to argue about it shows that some students are using their minds to debate an issue that means as much to Joe Blow student as the wrapper on a piece of Wrigley's gum.

Thanks to food service. Yes, you

read that right — food service. Students give you nothing but grief, despite the good things you try to do for them. You never heard me complaining when you brought us special dinners with fantail shrimp, crab legs, sirloin steaks and prime rib. I regret that you heard others doing it. Just know that there are some of us who appreciate what you do — even if we're not as vocal as the ignorant idiots who mock your efforts simply to get a laugh from their moronic friends.

No thanks to those students who are content to simply sit in their rooms, playing video games or watching TV, when local governments and dorm organizations did everything in their power to provide events and activities for you. It's a damn shame when you can't stop playing "Rogue Squadron" long enough to get off your butt and grab some free ice cream and actually talk with someone other than your floor neighbors.

Thanks to maintenance workers in the residence halls. Like food service employees, no one gives you the respect I feel you deserve. You clean our messes and come back the next morning to do it again. It's thankless work that at least I'll take the time to thank you for. Also, a thank you to Linda, my floor's cleaning lady, who said she would miss us kids when we're gone. You're a sweetheart and I'll miss you as well.

I'll miss ... the feeling that something was always happening in the hall — whether it be activities, goofing around by your friends and neighbors, half-naked vacuum races or assassination games.

I won't miss ... trying to carry 40 pounds of groceries from eight blocks away because I lost in "The Parking Game."

I'll miss ... the cheap and far-from-nourishing food at the Pub, which kept me going when Pepsi vending machines fell flat.

I won't miss ... staged fire drills, real fire drills, staged tornado drills, real tornado drills and walking down 10 flights of stairs every time they have one.

I'll remember ... each of our winless intramural football seasons, including the one where I threw four interceptions and got us only two first downs — one for when two defenders pulled my pants down, and one for when we got the opposing team to jump off sides.

I'll forget ... the fights, the anger, and the outcasting that has torn some dorm friends apart. We've all seen it happen, and when we live on the same floor with those on both sides of the fence, we can only wonder why.

I'll remember ... how good it felt to be a part of a floor that stuck together and formed some lasting friendships. I hope they will last beyond the residence halls to the future that lies ahead.

And, well, that's it. I can say that my time in the residence halls was an enjoyable time — with few regrets. Perhaps I could have bitched about the bad things and filled this column to the brim with complaints.

But I don't regret the four years lived within dorm walls. They provided experiences that perhaps I never could have known if I was fighting with the neighbor's dog at an apartment complex.

But everybody's gotta go sometime and say goodbye to their past.

I guess that time has arrived. To those just arriving in the dorms, I wish you the experiences I gladly realized and won't soon let go of. It's a time you, too, won't forget.

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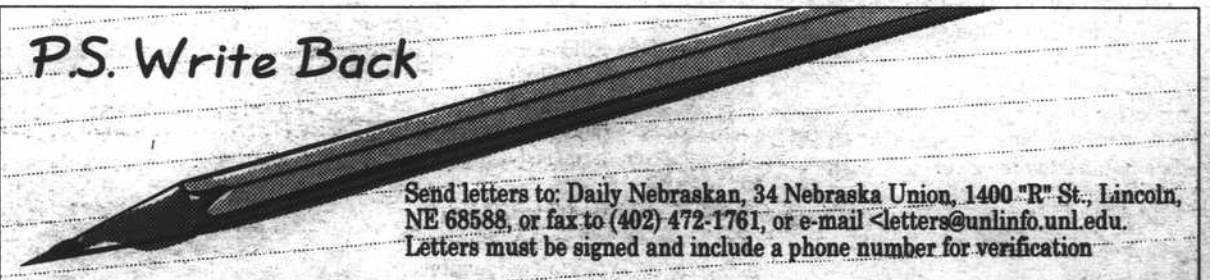
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