

## Unfair sexism leveled against student

BY TOM FIELDS  
CONTRIBUTING OPINION WRITER

I had been convicted and sentenced by a young woman without benefit of presenting evidence, or possibility of appeal.

My crime? Not finding offensive a snack ad extolling the virtue of only 2 grams of fat stated "sometimes more than 2 is too much" as the caption for a photo of a bikini top with three cups. A female acquaintance thought I should.

I should be branded with a scarlet "S" and sent to sensitivity training.

The ad in question was taken from an article in a monthly anti-domestic violence publication, along with a letter sent from one outraged woman to the manufacturers and advertisers who replied they would no longer use that particular photograph in future ad campaigns.

Because I did not immediately agree with the author's premise that the ad fostered further domestic violence, I was given the label "sexist" and told that I didn't appreciate domestic violence.

Now, had I been given an opportunity or an audience interested in finding out what I actually thought, I could easily have presented my "credentials" for being a non-sexist.

Had the other person been willing to converse rather than accuse and vilify, we could have learned something about each other and both grown from the experience.

My experience in this regard is all too common. A man states his personal opinion that he feels Mike Tyson was innocent, and all hell breaks loose. Fortunately the term "chauvinist" passed into oblivion along with Bobby Riggs. But "sexist" is re-emerging as the label of choice, replacing "witch" or "communist" as the crime for which punishment needs no evidence, only an

accusation.

The publication was being distributed by a young woman here on campus, a place of higher learning, which presupposes that someone actually wishes to learn something. But more and more I find a closed mindset becoming the norm.

It wasn't the promoters of Candace Gingrich's appearance who plastered signs all over campus, but rather homophobic Christian groups opposed to her speaking. It wasn't the followers of Mr. Farrakhan who got the press, but the extremists who wouldn't tolerate his presence. It isn't the normal law-abiding citizens of Idaho which draws the attention of the media, but the skinheads.

I was under the impression college life is a place to expand horizons, investigate more of the banquet Life offers, make intelligent choices after diligent research, and generally get out of the mindless acceptance of everything we'd had stuffed in our heads by school/

family/friends/TV/etc. However, it appears trendy to view anything different as dangerous, and all men are about to or are in the act of harassment.

If my accuser had been brave and taken a chance to actually communicate with me, she might have discovered we have many things in common. This is happening to me more and more frequently as it becomes fashionable for women to loudly accuse men of all kinds of harassment, abuse, discrimination, etc.

I do not for a minute claim that such things are actually not happening, but I also do not believe it is so widespread or pervasive as hype would have us believe. If you are offended by "Baywatch," then I suggest you tune into a different channel, not demand they take the show off the air. If you feel *Playboy* degrades women, don't buy a copy (I assure you, some women work for years to get into a position where they can audition for a chance to get their picture in

the magazine!).

If you think a man has said something sexist, ask what he is actually trying to communicate, because I believe automatically assuming he meant to be sexist is wrong. Give him the opportunity to explain himself, without becoming confrontational, and you will often be pleasantly surprised by the results.

Of course, there are real sexists out there, and I know some. It rankles me to have friends who can be so ignorant, so I limit my time around them. But I do not appreciate being the casualty of the current tendency for women to expect every comment to be layered with sexism. If you choose to put that kind of spin on everything you hear, then you will probably hear it everywhere, real or imagined.

So my final response to this young co-ed is a typically masculine one — "Oh yeah?"

### Letters to the editor

#### Discrimination alleged by student

To the editor:

I am writing to you concerning an article that you printed about the new CSUN anti-discrimination policy. I agree that it simply does not cut it. Even the old one did not help me much. I should know. I myself, have experienced discrimination in terms of employment here on campus.

In the summer of 1995, I

was searching for a summer job as a Spanish tutor in an effort to put my brand new Bachelor of Arts degree to good use for the first time. I called up to Student Employment Services, and the receptionist told me that a job was available, and to come in and fill out an application.

That same day, my mother and I went to the office. While we were waiting to speak to the lady who was in charge of the office (who was Caucasian) about being placed for this job, we overheard a telephone conversation between this lady

and another person who stated that they were in need of a Spanish tutor.

In the meantime, another Caucasian lady comes in for the same job I was looking for.

When the lady in charge of the office had terminated her phone conversation, she came to the front of the office greeting the other lady. The lady who was waiting, my mother, and I stood up simultaneously. However, we were completely ignored.

My mother perceived that something was not right about this lady's reaction to us. The lady in charge of the office took the other lady in the office, and told us flatly, "The position has been filled. However, there are some openings for receptionists, if you're interested."

My guess was that since she saw that not only was I African-American, but that I was also blind, (she) had written me off as a possible candidate for the position.

In other words, she must have thought in her mind that a black person was not capable of holding such a job, and decided to instead concentrate on one of her own. She obviously had no interest whatsoever in speaking to me to find out my credentials, or anything else for that matter.

What needs to happen is that there needs to be a stricter interpretation and enforce-

ment of anti-discrimination policies not only in the realm of employment, but also in every sector of student life, so that everyone has an equal chance to do whatever it is they would like to do.

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#### Student questions ed college spending

To the editor:

I am writing in response to the headline story of the Tuesday, March 5, 1996 edition of *The Rebel Yell*. I am outraged!

I have had so many problems at UNLV but this is the final straw! I understand that our mentoring teachers need to be paid but why should it come out of our pockets? Aren't we already paying for 14 credits during that semester? Where does that money go? I wondered why part of our tuition couldn't pay for this fee but then I saw that members of our student government were going out to nice dinners.

Many of my peers and I were even trying to figure out why we, as education majors, were not informed of this meeting. Shouldn't we have a say in the

matter since this is our money being spent?

If this fee is implemented, there should then be some changes made in the education department. We, as education majors, should be allowed to choose our mentor school and teacher. If I go out to eat and order a medium-well steak dinner which comes out rare, I'm going to send it back to get it right since I'm paying for it.

Therefore, if I'm paying for this teacher and this teacher is not "up to par" for my student teaching experience, then I should have the right to change my teacher. I know that this might cause some problems but so does implementing this fee.

The article states that the only alternative is to cut back the number of faculty, which would in turn cut back classes, thus limiting enrollment in the college of education. Well, I haven't had to pay this fee yet and that has already happened. There are waiting lists to get into the methods courses. Graduation can even be delayed if we can't get into these classes.

I would like to commend Regent Nancy Price, though, for standing on the side of the education majors!

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# THE REBEL YELL

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encourages students, faculty and staff to write letters to the editor. Letters should be formatted double-spaced on Macintosh disk in Microsoft Word, (or typed if you are technologically challenged), and include the author's name, address and telephonenumber. Writers affiliated with UNLV must

include class and major, or faculty or staff position. Writers requesting their name be withheld must include their name and telephone number for verification. Letters submitted without this information will not be printed. Letters are subject to edit for length and clarity.