

OUR VIEW Huge Hearts

The nation is mourning the tragedy that befell Virginia Tech University on Monday. Cho Seung-Hui is suspected of fatally shooting 32 people and wounding 17 before killing himself. The 23-year-old English student has been described in media reports as very intelligent but highly troubled. Unnerved by some of his writings, one professor took to teaching him one on one and eventually contacted authorities about his erratic behavior. "My argument was that he seemed so disturbed that we needed to do something about this," Lucinda Roy, former chair of Virginia Tech's English Department, told *CNN*.

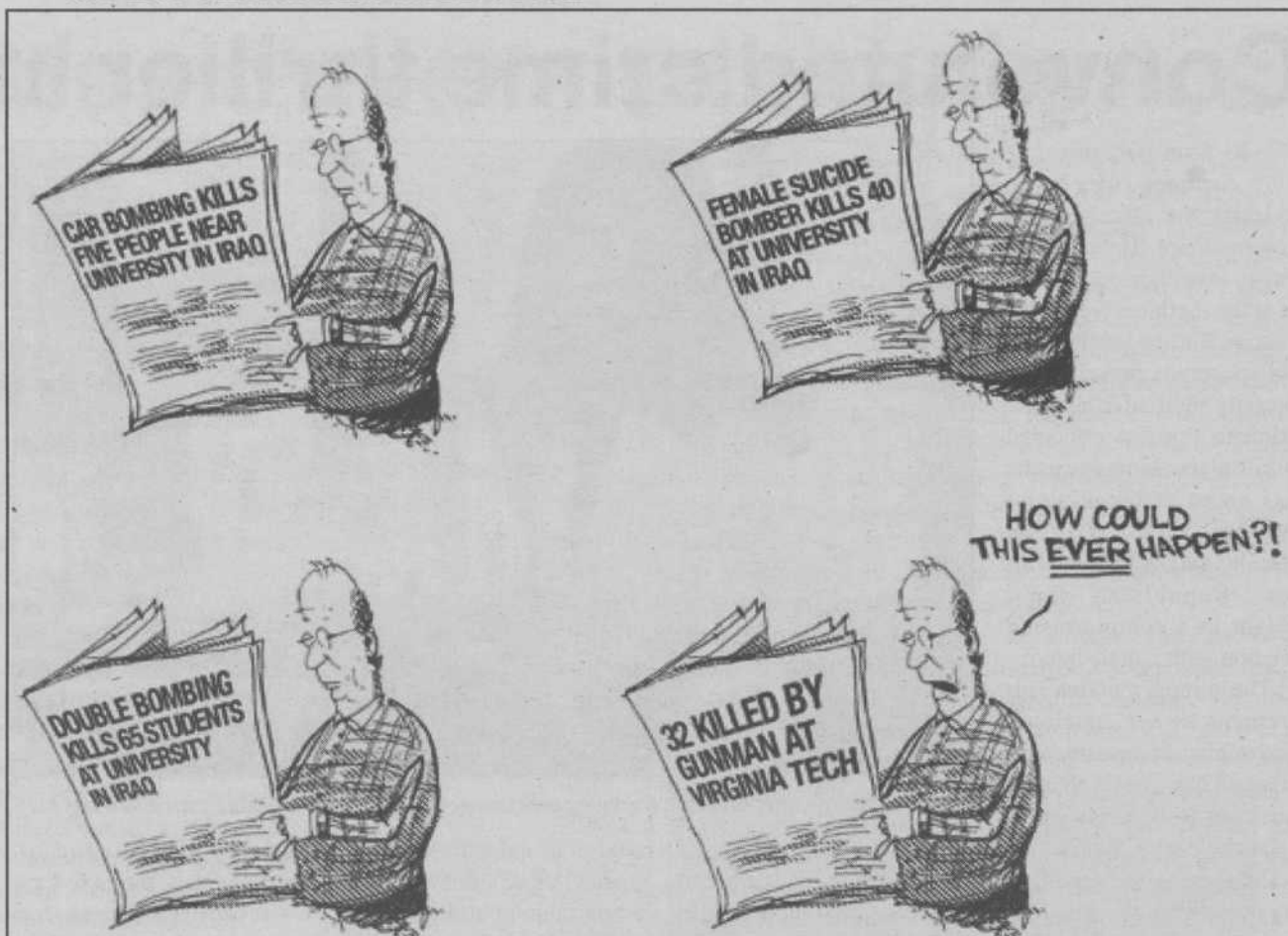
Tragedies have a way of reaffirming our common experience as human beings. The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks galvanized (if only briefly) nearly all segments of American society. A cross section of people died that fateful day: rich and poor, the high and the low, the masterful and the servile, people of different faiths, social strata and ethnicities. They were bonded in death. The nation was united in mourning and arrayed against the forces wishing us harm, whoever they were.

In the uncertain hours after the Twin Towers fell, there was collective worry about subsequent attacks (thankfully there were none.) Those same feelings surfaced on a smaller scale when a massive bomb inside a rental truck destroyed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995, killing 168 and injuring more than 800 (it was the deadliest act of terrorism on U.S. prior to 9/11); and they surfaced in 1993 when a car bomb detonated in an underground parking garage at New York's World Trade Center, killing six and injuring 1,042 people. You name the tragedy—Hurricane Katrina, Columbine, floods—and America generally opens its heart to help.

After the prayers and condolences, hindsight and second-guessing enter the fray, often followed by media overkill and endless analysis. For much of the nation, the pain eventually subsides. Ceremonies mark the anniversary. Laws might be put on the books, cosmetic changes made to the buildings that became caskets. America wears its heart on its sleeve.

Knowing our capacity for compassion and having witnessed America's generosity when it comes to mitigating human suffering, it's disheartening to see those traits not extended to the countries where our soldiers are waging war. Prior to the World Trade Center and Oklahoma City bombings and 9/11, terrorism was a foreign concept to most Americans. It was something that happened elsewhere, to other people, people not like us, people somehow caught amid the type of strife we were too good to get wrapped up in. Terrorism was reduced to headlines in the newspapers and clips on television. We'd look at images of restaurants turned to rubble and the walking wounded and see pictures of gunmen spraying automatic weapons or rock-throwing youth and wouldn't be moved. That was their war, not ours. Unfortunately, we've made wars in the Middle East (Afghanistan, Iraq) our business. That decision has cost the lives of more than 3,200 American soldiers. These brave men and women—these heroes—deserve all the praise and support we can muster. (Whether they're getting it is a different story altogether, as evidenced by the scandal at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the growing number of deserters, recruiting scandals, etc.) America's heart also needs to bleed for the tens of thousands of Iraqis killed and the unknown scores injured in the war. In a Monday report, *CNN* cited a new war study that claims about 655,000 Iraqis—more than 500 people a day—have died since the war began.

Just like the dead at Virginia Tech University, many of these deceased Iraqis had hopes and dreams and families. They were fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, grandparents and grandchildren, nieces and nephews and cousins. They deserve every ounce of sympathy we can offer. More than that, they deserve moral and monetary support. The Halliburton scandal is proof that the billions set aside for reinvigorating Iraq aren't doing that. Iraq is a mess of our government's making. As the purported moral authority of the world, it's incumbent upon us to fix our mistakes. We can start by showing that America's heart is as big as its fist.



Anna N. Smith not called a 'ho'

By George E. Curry
Special to Sentinel-Voice

In the around-the-clock media coverage of Anna Nicole Smith, I don't recall one shock jock calling her a "ho" or a slut. Yet, Don Imus felt emboldened enough to describe the Rutgers basketball team as a bunch of "nappy-headed 'ho's.'"

Never mind that the young women are not whores. Never mind that, courtesy of modern chemicals, they weren't even nappy-headed. Never mind that more than half of the predominantly Black team had a grade point average of 3.0 (B) or higher. To Imus, they were simply whores.

If they are 'ho's — shorthand for whores — then what in the world was Anna Nicole Smith?

She was a high school dropout performing at Gigi's, a Houston strip club, in October 1991, when she met oil billionaire J. Howard Marshall. Though married since the age of 17, Smith reportedly began an affair with Marshall. Two years later, she dumped her husband. On June 27, 1994, Smith, then 26 years old, married Marshall, 89.

She denied that she was a gold-digger and professed her love for her new husband, reportedly with whom she never lived. Just 13 months after the marriage, Marshall died, touching off a furious fight for his estate, valued at \$1.6 billion. The fight over the state continues to this day.

The other fight — the one



GEORGE E. CURRY

and could be the father. Mark "Hollywood" Hatten threw his hat into the fatherhood ring. And those are just the ones who came forward to admit they had slept with Anna Nicole Smith. DNA tests confirmed that Birkhead, the former boyfriend, is the father of Dannielynn.

With that record, it seems that if anyone would have been called a "ho" — and I am not saying she should have been described as such — it would have been Anna Nicole Smith, whose photo was used on the cover of a New York magazine issue titled "White Trash Nation."

Society has a double-standard when it comes to labels. Men who sleep around are described as just "spreading their oats." But women who do the same thing are called sluts and whores.

Let's not forget that the Rutgers women are not the only women who have been grossly maligned.

After Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-Ga.) had a run-in with Capitol Hill police, conservative talk show host Neal Boortz said on a Match 31, 2006, broadcast, "She looks like a ghetto slut." Referring to McKinney's hair, he said, "It looks like an explosion in a Brillo pad factory." At another point, he said, "She looks like Tina Turner peeing on an electric fence."

The sexist remarks are not limited to African-American women. According to the website *mediamatters.org*, Glenn Beck, a regular commentator on ABC's "Good Morning America," has referred to Hillary Clinton as "the stereotypical bitch." Michael Savage recently called Barbara Walters a "double-talking slut." Chris Matthews referred to Clinton as an "uppity" woman.

Even so-called liberal columnists, such as Maureen Dowd of *The New York Times* have sought to besmirch former Senator John

After Rep. Cynthia

McKinney (D-Ga.) had a run-in with Capitol Hill police, conservative talk show host Neal Boortz said on a Match 31, 2006, broadcast, "She looks like a ghetto slut."

Referring to McKinney's hair, he said, "It looks like an explosion in a Brillo pad factory." At another point, he said, "She looks like Tina Turner peeing on an electric fence."

Even so-called liberal columnists, such as Maureen Dowd of *The New York Times* have sought to besmirch former Senator John

After Rep. Cynthia

(See Curry, Page 11)

NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

GIROT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.

Nevada's only African-American community newspaper.
Published every Thursday by Griot Communications Group, Inc.
900 East Charleston Boulevard • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104
Telephone (702) 380-8100
Email: lvsentinelvoice@yahoo.com

Contributing Writers:
Frank Albano
Debbie Hall
Lés Pierres Streater
Kanika Vann

Ramon Savoy, Publisher, Editor-in-Chief
Parker Philpot, Copy Editor
Don Snook, Graphics
Ed & Betty Brown, Founders

Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association
and West Coast Black Publishers Association