"I KNOW YOU HATE YOURSELVES"
The Minutemen come to Morningside Heights
by Lydia DePillis

IF A TREE FALLS ON COLLEGE RADIO, DOES ANYONE HEAR IT? By Sasha De Vogel

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THE BLUE AND WHITE

Vol. XIII FAMAM EXTENDIMUS FACTIS No. III

www.theblueandwhite.org  COVER: "Minutemen" by Rachel Lindsay

NOVEMBER 2006
Václav Havel—the artist, the citizen, the residency—has descended upon Morningside Heights, and Columbia is prepared. Havel readings, Havel plays, Havel talks, you ask? Well, yes, but that's only the beginning! Have you gotten your Václav Havel Nalgene? Nalgenes are unbreakable, just like the will of Havel. Or your complimentary Václav Havel Papa John's—as sumptuous and delectable as the prose of the freedom-fighter himself. Havelicious!

These are—indubitably—fine commemorations of the gloriousness of Havel. But, you, dear Columbia student, can do better. For, if after seeing all 16 staged productions of the Havel canon, you are still thirsty for more, Columbia is ready to provide. Look at the scheduled Havel events, and wonder at the unlimited possibilities of Havel: Architects! Plastic People of the Universe! Orhan Pamuk!

Wait, what's that, first-years? You don't know who Havel is? Don't worry—just wait for that 9:10 Lit Hum class, when you will be coaxed into expressing your feelings about the man, or perhaps even apply your feminist reading of Medea to Havel's Garden Party. And Lou Reed is ready to tell you about Havel right now. Columbia's Havel web site offers an interview segment entitled "The Velvet Revolution and the Velvet Underground," in which the king of heroin-themed rock-fantasia contemplates his connection to the Czech writer-politician. "The Velvet Revolution, they meant peaceful," Reed says. "It was not named after the Velvet Underground, that's my understanding, much as I would like, I suppose, to think of it the other way." I'm sure the feeling is mutual.

—Andrew Flynn
Senior Editor

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**TRANSACTIONS**

**DEPARTURES**

Starting cornerback Chad Musgrove, C'08.

Barnard dorm superintendent Oscar Sevilla, for filing a false police report, indicating that he was stabbed on 110th Street.

Bill O'Reilly's commie-hunt.

Our respect for student council, after their Metrocard discounts amount to a measly two percent—$19.60 for a $20 card.

**ARRIVALS**

Havelmania!

Orhan Pamuk's Nobel Prize for Literature.

Edmund Phelps' Nobel Prize for Economics.

Presumably the world's best flan, for $6.50 at Havana Central at the West End.

Two new trustees, Kyriakos Tsakopoulos, C'93, and Kenneth Forde, Medicine '59.

$15 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to the Earth Institute.

CTV's much hyped soap The Gates, with kissing lesbians.

**WE'RE STILL WAITING**

"Erotic review" Outlet aims to bring eroticism to Columbia. Where are the boobs?

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**THE BLUE AND WHITE**
COME AGAIN...? “Of course, having never seen much grit for most of their lives, Columbia students tend to balk at the first sight of too much reality—like going above 125th street. On the other hand, joining a protest group is easy and safe but still ‘edgy’ and cool. It lets students feel good about themselves and their convictions and their fight against ‘the man’ without ever having to leave the shelter and structure of campus.”

—Matt Mireles, GS’08, writing in The New York Post

DIGIT TALES: HIGH ROLLERS

Columbia’s top three earners, as of 2004:

David N. Silvers, Clinical Professor of Dermatology
$3,721,741 (0.15% of operating expenses)

Eric Allen Rose, Professor of Surgery
$1,800,425 (0.07% of operating expenses)

Mehmet C. Oz, Professor of Surgery
$1,549,542 (0.06% of operating expenses)

And their bosses:

Lee Bollinger, President
$641,835 (0.02% of operating expenses)

Judith R. Shapiro, President of Barnard
$301,000 (0.26% of Barnard’s expenses)

CALENDAR

November 15, 2006, 3-4 p.m., Roone Arledge Auditorium
Attend what should be the most presidential event of the year, the Kraft Program Series: Challenges of New Democracies. Starring President Václav Havel and President Bill Clinton and moderated by President Lee Bollinger.

November 16, 8:30 p.m., James Room, 4th Floor, Barnard Hall
The 21st Annual Joyce Kilmer Memorial Bad Poetry Contest. But isn’t it all bad poetry, really?

November 17, 7 p.m., Levien Gym
Take your place in the Lion’s Den for the men’s basketball team’s first home game. They face the Highlanders of the New Jersey Institute of Technology, a very bad team.

December 1-2, 8 p.m., Miller Theatre
See Václav Havel’s adaptation of John Gay’s The Beggar’s Opera, presented by the Barnard Slavic and Theatre Departments, and the Harriman Institute. There will be puppets.

Bluebook compiled by Ian Solsky and Josie Swindler, illustrations by Jerone Hsu

November 2006
nostalgia! Oh sparkle-eyed memories of freshman year, dazedly recognizing familiar faces in John Jay after epic nights of debauchery, donning sweats and double fisting Gatorade and coffee to partake in the token conversations of the omelette line: “remember that stupid bitch who got CAVAed?”

Being CAVAed, being carried in a stretcher down the steps of a brownstone by kids you vaguely remember from Chem lab, is the most demeaning experience of Columbia nightlife—whether you were conscious at the time or not. But while the CAVA experience has historically ended with an IV and a trip to the dry cleaners, now Columbia has decided to crack down.

Beginning this year, the BASICS (Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students) program is a new step in Columbia’s involvement with the alcoholic extracurriculars of its student body. The BASICS program is “designed to assist students in examining their own drinking behavior in a judgment-free environment.”

For everyone who gets CAVAed, this involves attending two sessions, two weeks apart, of 30- and 45-minute durations, where the student discusses his or her drinking habits one-on-one with a trained BASICS counselor (confidentially of course). The student is given “homework” in the form of a small card to be carried around to the ol’ watering holes for recording how much, on what days, and over what duration drinking strikes. Although BASICS seems like an Alcohol.edu spin-off in itself, the program also requires the completion of an online survey questionnaire.

The information provided about typical alcohol intake, the perverse motivations that cause you to drink, and relative aptitude in remembering how to calculate BAC makes up the content of the second session, which takes a personalized look at the trends in the student’s habits and makes suggestions to prevent future incidents. Though the process is relatively painless, it takes the somewhat light-hearted moments of drunken misjudgment out of the dark night and smoky house to the real world of Columbia—as if the high heel-shaped bruise, hundred dollar co-pay, and phone call to the parents wasn’t enough margarita salt on the wound.

—Rachel Lindsay

On a late-summer night in the East Village, a trendy crowd has gathered for an hour of creative enlightenment... at a laundromat. The occasion is Dirty Laundry: Loads of Prose (dirtylaundryreadings.com), a reading series that transforms laundromats into literary havens and the task of washing clothes into something oddly dramatic. Established and emerging writers share their work with loyal fans, curious passersby, and the innocent few who just need clean clothes.

A member of the third contingent catches our attention, just as Act II—“The Dry Cycle”—is about to begin.
A disheveled grad student, en route to the dryer, has inadvertently stepped in front of the microphone, landing in the limelight. Clad in stained t-shirt and last-resort sweatpants, he wasn’t anticipating a public appearance. But as he maneuvers past the makeshift stage and through the crowd, directing his laundry cart with the utmost care, his mundane behavior becomes a stirring, suspenseful part of the show. We applaud his performance.

Perhaps this balance between the intellectual and the mundane—between writing and people-watching—has fueled the growing popularity of Loads of Prose. Its west coast debut last month drew record attendance, and legitimate writers are now looking for gigs at such prestigious venues as Avenue C Laundromat and Cosmos Launderama.

Our very own Broadway Bubbles (Broadway between 107th and 108th) hosts the next event on November 15 at 8 p.m. Bring your lights, darks, or delicates, because just like the entertainment, the quarters and detergent are free. Authors Lisa Ferber and Will Leitch will read; Kevin Draine, “The Bitter Poet,” will throw in a musical interlude; and, rounding out the program— whoever shows up with their dirty laundry.

—Siobhan Burke

A lifetime of meaty, sumptuous Chinese cooking made me nervous to meet Kathleen Christatos, B’07, president of Columbia Students for Animal Protection, a group she founded this year.

But the native Nebraskan travels with a warm smile, in addition to a bulky stack of information on the merits of veganism. I eyed it warily. Was I about to be told that my lifestyle had caused harm to countless animals in unforgivable living conditions? Well...yes.

A handout from an “Eating is Ethics” panel in honor of Vegan Awareness Week in October (Christatos even got Dining Services to observe it!) best summed up the club’s intentions and values: vegans avoid all animal products, for health, moral, and environmental reasons. This means no eggs or dairy, since their production increases the suffering of cows and chickens, not to mention the environmental tolls of pollution and wasted resources. Twice the sinner, I shifted uncomfortably in my seat.

As she shuffled through information booklets citing a growing acceptance of these issues and showed me pictures from her internship at Farm Sanctuary, an animal protection and rescue organization in upstate New York, Christatos’ enthusiasm was impressive, even if I remain an irreversible carnivore.

She knows there are diverse views on veganism within the club and in the Columbia community, so she’s willing to make some concessions. “On a personal level, I abstain [from animal products], but on a policy level, my goals are for more humane legislation,” said the political science and psychology double major, who plans on attending law school, with special interest in—not surprisingly—animal law and civil rights and liberties law. The club is, then, “not an attack” on non-vegans, Christatos was careful to emphasize, but rather a way to create awareness of the impacts of eating.

—Jessica Lin

Illustrations by Jenny Lam
You might not know the following figures—but you should. In Campus Characters, The Blue and White introduces you to a handful of Columbians who are up to interesting and extraordinary things, and whose stories beg to be shared. If you'd like to suggest a Campus Character, send us an e-mail at theblueandwhite@columbia.edu.

SHADÈ Ogunleye

Mofolashè Ashani Olukeji Ogunleye, C'09, is an average Columbia sophomore. She gets up early to fulfill her pre-med requirements, loves MySpace, and eats a lot—"the car doesn't run without fuel," she explains. Except that she created a Mexican orphanage. And she's Miss Black New York. Oh, and she might be a Nigerian princess.

When prodded, Shadè smiles, explaining that her great-grandfather was the chief of a Yoruba tribe. This is all she's willing to admit. Wild speculations aside, Shade's past is still an impressive story. She was born in "a Mormon town in south California"—Santa Clarita—to a redhead mother and a Nigerian motivational speaker. During a trip to a Mexican orphanage, Shade was appalled by the living conditions; babies were changed once a day and showered once a week. So she enlisted her mother's help in starting the education-oriented non-profit "Kids International Foundation." Eventually she was able to build an entirely new orphanage in Tijuana—El Faro ("The Lighthouse"). "It's one of those things that makes me feel like I'm doing something with my life," Shade says of the orphanage.

Shade has been outspoken on a whole range of issues, publishing newspaper articles about her brother who has cerebral palsy and about being African-American in a predominately Caucasian area. She mentions in passing her victory in the Miss Jr. Teen California Pageant at sixteen. And then—mostly by accident—she became Miss Black New York. "I was surfing the web and sort of stumbled on the Miss Black USA pageant," Shade explains. "[I] saw that they were searching for state delegates and I thought, 'Why not?" So she sent in her picture, bio, and application. Two weeks later she participated in a three-hour phone interview and two days after that was presented with the title, by phone.

Now, Shade has bigger, more important goals, like winning the Miss Black USA pageant in May 2007. She knows exactly what she'd do with her reign: promote her signature issue, spreading HIV awareness. As with all of her advocacy, Shade's words ring with a personal urgency. "I had always associated AIDS with gays, druggies and third world countries," she told me. "But then I met Stephanie. I didn't have to go anywhere else to help out—AIDS is here." Stephanie was Shade's first year roommate at Columbia. Her parents died of AIDS and her brother was born with the disease. Shade couldn't not make Stephanie's story the backbone of her platform.

Shade was in impressive form when speaking at a high school recently. She presented the facts clearly: AIDS is the number one killer of African-Americans from ages twenty-five to forty-four in the United States. Her message is even stronger. "How many more children have to die?" she asked the crowd. "How many more Stephanie's have to suffer? How many more children will become orphaned because of AIDS?"

Afterward, a flock of girls rushed over to Shade, to talk to her for over an hour about boyfriends and other girly things. They asked if she used Proactive and if she played basketball in high school, and playfully presented her with the title of "Miss Universe." Really, though, she's not far off.

—Alex de Léon
Roy Feldman

A magician walks into a real estate agency. "Hey, I just got my real estate license and I'd like a job," he says.

The receptionist looks at the young man in jeans and chuckles. There's no punch line to this joke. A sleight-of-hand magician, Roy Feldman, C'09, was dead serious when he walked into Barak Realty on 72nd Street this summer, looking for employment. He wanted a job close to campus, but after years of making $300 per gig pulling quarters out of kids' ears on Long Island, he says he couldn't fathom swiping cards in dorm lobbies for 10 bucks an hour.

So the spoils of a summer playing real estate broker on the Upper West Side were attractive—though Roy found showing apartments as theatrical as staging a magic show.

"It's up to you to make yourself seem like you're experienced," he says. "If you can walk up to somebody, having been in real estate for one week, and say 'I'm the best rentals broker on the West Side'—if you can say that and keep a straight face and set aside the fact that it's totally immoral—then you could probably be a good real estate broker."

For Roy, magic and real estate are both deceptive arts. But there's a key difference: "In magic you're bullshitting people, but they know you're bullshitting them."

Roy started his pursuit of all things bullshit in the second grade, when he bought his first magic trick to play the part of Merlin in a school play. At 11, he headlined the Christmas show at the Bayside branch of the Queens Public Library.

That summer, he went to magic camp for an intensive week of workshops and classes taught by professional magicians—a camp to which he has returned each year since.

As he honed his talent, he began a "target-marketing campaign" to seek out wealthy clients in Queens and Long Island. By his senior year in high school he was filling his weekends with Bar Mitzvahs and birthday parties, entertaining swarms of uninterested 'tweens and disgruntled six-year-olds with his elaborate, comedic, energy-draining routines.

Roy practices "stand-up magic," a blend of comedy and magic that uses the magician's "character" as a medium. Roy says all of his characters are well-versed in the one-liner, just like his comedic influences: Sid Caesar, Mel Brooks, and Woody Allen. "There's a lot of heckling," he says. "But it's not the same type of heckling [as in stand up]. It's not like they're saying, 'Roy, I slept with your mother!'"

Roy casually inserts one-liners into conversation the way some of us insert verbal crutches. A few weeks ago, he told floormates that at Bar Mitzvahs and birthday parties his stage name is just Roy Feldman. "But at communions," he says, "it's Roy McAllister."

Or this gem: "My grandmother likes to call me sometimes. She calls me every two weeks to ask me why I don't call her at least once a month."

But there's something about his pithy character that makes him uneasy. He feels he is constantly performing—at magic shows, campus plays, and apartment open houses. That doesn't leave much time or energy for just being Roy.

"I've been performing so much it's more natural for me to be acting," he says.

He is also concerned about his future money-making prospects as a performer and calls his passions—filmmaking and acting—"not guaranteed." But he'll always have that real estate license as insurance if he finds himself without acting jobs.

After all, Roy says, "I don't want to be 45 years old, living in a box and eating ketchup soup."

At least he'll have his one-liners to keep him company.

—Sara Vogel
"I KNOW YOU HATE YOURSELVES."

The Minutemen come to Morningside Heights.

BY LYDIA DEPILLIS

ILLUSTRATED BY RACHEL LINDSAY

It started with a poster. Karina Garcia, C'07, and Martin Lopez, C'07, were flyering for a financial aid reform campaign in late September when they spotted a stylized drawing of a Revolutionary War soldier holding a cell phone and binoculars, next to the announcement that Jim Gilchrist, founder of the two-year-old Minuteman Project, would speak at Columbia on October 4.

The typical Minuteman is a 60-year old white male, probably armed, who sits in a lawn chair and calls border security when he sees someone suspiciously straggling across the desert.

"We were just really shocked," said Garcia, the political chair of Chicano Caucus, a campus group for students of Mexican origin. "It was a ridiculous sign."

The Columbia University College Republicans invited Gilchrist, a former accountant from Orange County, to Columbia to "let us know" about illegal immigration. "It's definitely a threat to our way of life and safety," CUCR president Chris Kulawik, C'08, told the Columbia Daily Spectator on October 2. No stranger to controversy, Kulawik writes an opinion column for the Spectator and, in November 2005, brought former attorney general John Ashcroft to campus.

THE BLUE AND WHITE
On September 26, Garcia called for an open planning meeting. She wrote in a second e-mail two days later, “These bigots and their backward views are NOT welcome here!” Eva Fortes, C’09 created a Facebook group called “Protest the Minutemen!” that soon reached 600 members. Act Now to Stop War and End Racism (ANSWER), a nationwide “anti-imperialist” organization that Garcia has worked for part-time, helped secure a sound system and street permits for a protest on Broadway. Groups including the Black Students Organization and Asian American Alliance, as well as the College Democrats, encouraged their members to attend the protest and challenge Gilchrist in the scheduled Q & A session.

About a week before the event, CUCR Executive Director Lauren Steinberg, C’09, sent an e-mail to leaders of four campus Latino organizations, asking them to cosponsor the event. All declined. Chicano Caucus president Adhemir Romero, C’07, said the timing left no room for planning input, and pointed out that CUCR didn’t need the financial support that co-sponsorships typically provide. “I had to read it twice through,” he said three weeks later, still incredulous. Maybe a later event, he wrote back, one where there could be a panel with multiple perspectives.

At 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 4, at least 200 people gathered inside a police cordon on 115th Street. The crowd waved signs and a woman on a microphone shouted slogans in English and Spanish, her voice echoing across the quad and through the walls of Butler library.

“Workers of the world unite! Same struggle, same fight!”

“Minutemen, Nazis, KKK! Racists, fascists, go away!”

Leah Krauss, B’08, marched with several friends in the light drizzle. “I think the Minutemen represent what’s wrong in people, and this represents what’s best in people,” she said, pointing to the fiery crowd around her.

The crowd thinned as the 8:00 p.m. start time approached, and people filtered into Lerner Hall.

Seated dressed College Republicans checked Columbia ID cards at the turnstiles while security officers stood by the entrance to Roone Arledge Auditorium sifting through purses. According to Kulawik, at least one plot was foiled when guards found eggs in a student’s bag.

Seats filled up quickly. Those unable to find chairs crossed into the roped-off section reserved for press and College Republicans. About 10 security officers ringed the room. Administrators circled in the back of the room, behind the cameras trained on the stage.

Meanwhile, Garcia, Monique Dols, GS’07, and David Judd, E’08, were telling a few students in white shirts, which protesters wore as a sign of solidarity, that they planned to bring banners on stage when Gilchrist came up to speak. Dols, a petite brunette, and Judd, a bespectacled Computer Science major, form the core of Columbia’s International Socialist Organization. The ISO’s presence on campus is largely limited to co-sponsorship of events and selling copies of the Socialist Worker every Thursday on College Walk.

Garcia would not tell me how many people she told, although one source says that about 20 people knew ahead of time. Romero, and many others who helped plan the outside protest, had no idea she had planned an action for inside as well. Right before the event, she explicitly assured a concerned Fortes, who been designated to write a Spectator editorial after the event, that the plan was still to just ask tough questions during the Q & A session.

At 8:10, Minuteman Director of Community Relations Marvin Stewart, a black minister in a dark green suit, started his speech by thanking Jesus Christ and then Kulawik. He launched into a sermon on the responsibility of Christian citizens to defend the founding principles of America. The audience responded with cries of “black white supremacist!” and “Go home!” Stewart bellowed back, “I am home! God bless America, and America bless God!”

Stewart had been allocated 20 minutes, but his
increasingly free-associative rant approached the 40-minute mark. The heckling crowd erupted in applause when someone shouted, "In Spanish, please!" One by one, students stood and turned their backs, until entire rows faced the back of the auditorium. "Are you standing with your backs to me?" Stewart demanded. "Why'd you come? No wonder you don't know anything."

Concerned administrators looked unsure of what to do. Kulawik stood uncomfortably next to the podium, and Stewart's voice cracked as beads of sweat trickled down his forehead. "Religion and morality are necessary for government," he barked. "Wrap it up! Wrap it up!" chanted the students.

Finally, Stewart finished, shouting, "God bless America, and America bless God!"

Kulawik took the podium and chastened the crowd. "I was under the false assumption that this was an Ivy League School."

Then, at about 8:45, Jim Gilchrist—a stout man with a snow-white crew cut—entered and put his arm around Stewart. "Now who're you calling racist?" he shouted. "I love the First Amendment. As soon as you graduate, you'll all be investment bankers. I've been where you at. I know you hate yourselves."

The floor of Roone Arledge brimmed with noise like a football stadium. "Hey! What's the deal with illegal immigration?" he sneered.

After speaking for roughly a minute, Gilchrist turned to his right and noticed that Dols and Judd had entered stage right. They held up a yellow banner that read, in Spanish, English, and Arabic, "No One is Illegal." The speech was over.

Dols was ecstatic. "We were met with an overwhelming sense of elation from the crowd that had been abused by the Minutemen speakers [Stewart and Gilchrist], and were insulted and disrespected and were happy to see our message on that stage, side by side with the Minutemen," she said a week later.

Almost immediately, about 10 audience members wearing white shirts jumped onstage to join her and Judd. They stood with their fists raised as the crowd roared. Garcia and an unidentified graduate involved with ANSWER unfurled a white sign, this one declaring, "Say No to Racism."

The protestors expected security to promptly usher them off the stage, as had happened to Dols last November when she similarly interrupted the Ashcroft speech. They did not expect that several Minuteman supporters and College Republicans—who had been sitting in the roped-off section up front—would mount the stage and begin a furious tug of war, touching off a brawl that would be replayed on televisions across the country.

Snapshots, pieced together from shaky videos and conflicting memories (including my own), emerge from those frenzied minutes.

Lopez, lurching across the floor in front of the stage, passed below a looming Kulawik and then recoiled as a ponytailed man in a black baseball hat—later identified by Spectator as Kevin Hahulsky, a welder from Queens—kicked him in the head. The Minuteman Project's spokesman later denied any connection with those who defended Gilchrist, and condemned the violence.

One protester went face to face with Stewart, who pulled out a can of pepper spray and said, "What are you going to do?" The protester, who was white, called him a racist and said, "No human being is illegal!"

As tables were overturned and security guards tried to detain the protesters, Gilchrist, who had been hustled backstage, briefly reemerged. He stood next to a man who appeared to be Hahulsky, and the two recited the pledge of allegiance at the top of their lungs while saluting wildly. "One nation! Under God! Indivisible!"

Chants broke out sporadically, people stood on chairs to see over the crowd, and Gilchrist retreated behind a curtain that swept across the stage as the mêlée faded. Security cleared the auditorium within 15 minutes.

Brett Ashley Longoria, BC'08 and a member of the College Republicans, was watching from the back of the room when the fighting broke out. "I..."
Think the lack of courtesy that people displayed not only hurts their cause but makes them look ridiculous,” she said.

Minutemen supporters from outside Columbia milled in the lobby before venturing out into the rain. A man said he had headbutted one of the “Socialist Fascist Commies” whom he thought was trying to get at Gilchrist. “I just grabbed her by the waist and threw her,” he said, shrugging. “They really enforce security here,” quipped a woman in sunglasses and a shirt that read “No trespassing” as public safety officers hurried her out of the building.

Inside an emptied Roone Arledge, administrators from Public Safety, Facilities, Communications, and Student Services met to hash out preliminary plans for a fact-finding investigation. University Spokesman Robert Hornsby left afterwards with Vice President of Communications David Stone to prepare a statement for when the networks and newspapers came calling.

At a late-night Chicano Caucus meeting, which had been previously scheduled to finalize details for an upcoming conference, members frantically tried to obtain footage of Lopez getting kicked that they had just seen on the Spanish-language channel Univision. With one-third of the 12-person board present, they drafted a carefully worded paragraph claiming responsibility for the protest outside while distancing themselves from the storming of the stage. “I thought that the finger was going to be pointed at us,” Romero said three weeks later.

Those who rushed the stage called their own meeting, attended by some of the missing Chicano Caucus members (including Garcia) to craft a statement under the name “People on the Stage”—fearing retribution, they didn’t append their names. Lopez and an outsider from the Party for Socialism and Liberation were cut and bleeding. People in the room described the atmosphere as a mixture of triumph, anger, and an overwhelming sense that something momentous had occurred. With so many video cameras in the room, they thought, how could people not see that Gilchrist’s violence towards immigrants at the border had been brought to the world stage? “I was amazed at the anger and vehemence of those girls,” said one person in attendance. “They felt attacked.”

Kulawik saw Gilchrist off and then met with the CUCR board to discuss media strategy. That night, Columbia College Democrats President Mike Nadler, C’07, called to express support and condemn the storming of the stage. At 9:00 the next morning, I caught Kulawik while he was doing his homework, having just come from a second strategy session. “They literally staged a premeditated attack,” he said over the phone, before delivering a message that he would soon be repeating on Fox News: “I think we’re all in a little bit of shock of how large this fringe movement is at Columbia.”

“W hen I first heard about it, I knew we were going to get a lot of publicity about this, but it wasn’t really until I saw films that I realized the magnitude,” said Provost Alan Brinkley on Oc-
"When I first heard about it, I knew we were going to get a lot of publicity about this, but it wasn't really until I saw films that I realized the magnitude," said Provost Alan Brinkley.

October 20. "Once you had film, it would be shown on television, then you’re in a different world of publicity.”

The Bwog, the blog of The Blue and White, had posted CTV video of the event by 1:30 a.m. The same clip would air on MSNBC, CNN, four different Fox News shows, and The Daily Show. It was soon one of the most popular videos on YouTube. The shaky footage veered from Gilchrist to a shot of students in white shirts joining Dols and Judd, capturing the chaos of the crowd while missing much of violence on the stage. Univision’s shot of Hahulsky kicking Lopez was not shown or made available to an English-speaking audience until it was YouTubed on Sunday.

Right-wing blogger Michelle Malkin picked up the story at 12:45 a.m., and others followed. The next day, Stewart appeared on Fox News’s The O’Reilly Factor while Kulawik and Gilchrist went on Hannity and Colmes. “What we are facing with is not just one group,” said Gilchrist. “It’s a tangle of different radical and anarchist groups...This is the 21st century KKK, and we better get used to it. They are domestic terrorists. Their goal is to disrupt and deprive anyone of the First Amendment except themselves.”

Kulawik made four appearances on Fox News and gave interviews to multiple newspapers. Hornsby said that Kulawik had asked him prior to the Gilchrist event for advice on getting media to attend. The training paid off—when I called his cell phone in the days afterwards, his voicemail box was invariably full.

Stewart told a sympathetic O’Reilly that the crowd had called him “the N-word,” and claimed that the Arabic writing on the yellow banner said that the Holocaust did not happen. No one involved with the protests had agreed to go on the show to contradict him. The following night O’Reilly warned B&W Editor-in-Chief Avi Zenilman, C'07, who appeared on the show to debate Kulawik, that the campus was held captive by a “left-wing jihad.” Jon Stewart summed up the dominant storyline when he congratulated “the pencil-neck caucus” for “making Sean Hannity seem like the reasonable one.”

The leadership of the Chicano Caucus felt lost and embattled. They had been linked to the storming of the stage both by Garcia, who used her title on radio and TV broadcasts, and Kulawik, who named the group (along with the ISO) as an organizer of the action. Board members spent hours in meetings with administrators to clear their name. Romero ignored nearly all media requests. “We were deeply hurt because we were portrayed in the wrong image,” said Chicano Caucus member Rocio Beltran, C’09. “We did our best to clarify without pointing to any names, without singling anyone out.”

The university remained largely silent. Other than releasing two statements and granting an interview to The New York Times, Bollinger declined to comment, citing consideration for an ongoing
MINUTEMEN

investigation. Neda Nevab, C’08 said the protest dominated the conversation at a conference of Columbia alumni that she attended days after the event. Confusion abounded, and many were concerned that they hadn’t received enough information from the administration about what had really happened.

“They [the university] should be feeling more pressure,” said History grad student and former GSAS president Kira von Ostenfeld. “We’re creating a reputation for ourselves to [be] automatically dismissed as, ‘Okay, that’s a leftist school.’ That’s a moniker that sticks.”

The People on the Stage—newly incarnated as the Minuteman Protesters Defense Committee (MPDC) —held a press conference on Monday, October 9 outside Lerner’s Broadway entrance, the same place where the first protest had taken place the previous Wednesday. A yellow banner with both slogans from the stage occupation and six time-lapsed video stills of Martin Lopez getting kicked lined the gates. Lopez told the cameras he had been kicked twice, first by a Minuteman and then by Chris Kulawik—although he couldn’t be sure about the latter (Kulawik, citing unfair treatment on the Bwog, has refused to answer any of The Blue and White’s questions since October 12). He also demanded that Columbia take no action against students who stormed the stage.

Dols and Garcia emphasized that they had not started the violence, and attempted to reframe what had become a dispute over free speech as a debate on the “racist, fascist, armed, vigilante” Minutemen. When asked about the accusation, made by Kulawik on Fox News, that the first banner had been a signal for students to storm the stage, Garcia replied: “It was not a signal for anyone to rush the stage.”

Two days later Garcia appeared opposite Gilchrist on Democracy Now!, a left-leaning radio and television program, and called him a murderer. The only time Gilchrist has killed anyone was as a soldier in Vietnam. On the advice of a lawyer, Gilchrist cut the interview short. Garcia later argued that as the leader of the Minutemen, he had indirectly caused deaths by intimidating people crossing the border into taking more dangerous routes.

Following advice from the National Lawyers Guild, MPDC took several steps other than the press conference to avoid punishment. They organized teach-ins about the Minutemen, and started an online petition, which soon gathered over 3,000 signatures. They blanketed the campus with flyers that spoke of their protest and the immigrant struggle in terms of a new civil rights movement, invoking the words of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Political Science Professor Rodolfo de la Garza, who studies Latino political movements and received the Life-time Achievement Award of the Committee on the Status of Latinos from the American Political Science Association in 1993, disagreed with the parallel and criticized the protesters for attempting to avoid the consequences of their “self-serving” actions. “They played right into his hands,” he said. “They legitimized Gilchrist...they could have done a wonderful thing. Instead, they allowed Gilchrist to win.”

Thirty-nine professors and graduate students in the History Department, including Eric Foner and Janaki Bakhle, signed a letter to President Bollinger asking that he condemn the “overt and covert racism of the Minutemen” and not single out the protesters as the only threat to free speech. Assistant Professor of Anthropology Nicholas De Genova praised the protestors for “turning abstract knowledge and theoretical concerns into elementary, but fundamental, practices of liberation.”

But the protesters’ strongest support came from off campus: while few people not involved in the protest attended MPDC meetings, ISO members with no connection to Columbia gathered signatures in support of the protesters in Union Square. World Can’t Wait!, an anti-war group, issued a strongly worded statement against punishment of the protesters, and ANSWER put a form letter to President Bollinger on its web site.

Five students who stormed the stage received letters from Vice Provost Steve Rittenberg charg-
ing them with infractions under the Rules of University Conduct, a rarely used set of special guidelines established in the early 1980s by trustees seeking to avoid a repeat of 1968, when student protests took over several campus buildings.

If the protesters are found to have violated the sections enumerated in the letters—the disciplinary process is still underway at print time—they could be suspended or expelled. President Bollinger will serve as the final point of appeal. The defendants assert that a harsh punishment could have a “chilling effect” on protest at Columbia.

In an e-mail sent a week before the protests, Garcia wrote, “they [the Minutemen] exist only to intimidate our communities, to spread fear, and sow division.” Nonetheless, they enjoy significant popular support: a recent Pew Hispanic Center survey found that 33 percent of Americans approve of the Minutemen’s patrols. (At the time of the survey, over 40 percent had not heard of them.)

Democrats have tacked to the right on immigration in recent months—the Columbia Democrats campaigned this year in Ohio for Senate candidate Sherrod Brown, who has criticized the Bush administration for not being tough enough on illegal immigration. And on October 26, President Bush—who has spoken disapprovingly of the Minutemen as “vigilantes”—signed off on the construction of a 700-mile fence on the Mexican border. If protestors have a hard time making their case at Columbia, they’re not alone.

Although the Southern Poverty Law Center touts evidence suggesting an overlap between the membership of the Minuteman Project and white supremacist groups such as the National Alliance, the Project fervently refuses official help from “separatists, racists, or supremacy groups.” While it’s easy to find quotes from members and leaders evincing hostility to Mexicans, Gilchrist’s book *Minutemen: The Battle to Secure America’s Borders*, co-written with Jerome Corsi, repeatedly insists that the Project is “multiethnic,” a “cross section of every day [sic] Americans.” (The book also indulges in conspiracy theories that involve the Catholic Church, Mexican takeovers of the Southwest, and secret government efforts to unify Mexico, Canada, and the United States.) None of the Minutemen has been charged with a crime.

Gilchrist’s media operation is consistently improving. Corsi—who was slated to speak after Gilchrist on October 4—also co-wrote *Unfit for Command*, the Swift Boat attack book that helped sink John Kerry in 2004. On October 19, Gilchrist appeared on *The Colbert Report* and talked about the value of legal immigration. When Stephen Colbert suggested that America build an electric fence on the border and make Mexicans wear electric collars,
he was deftly shot down: “Mr. Colbert, you would never make it with the Minuteman Project.”

Not everyone in the immigration debate is as interested in the national media. Ron Lewenberg, the son of Polish-Jewish immigrants, came to Columbia in 1997. He helped found Columbia College Conservative Club (C4) as an alternative to the Republicans and sees immigration as a process of conversion to a set of traditions. “We don’t say, Your God, my God. But we do say, My people, your people,” he explained.

In response to the immigrants’ rights marches of May 1, Lewenberg formed New York Immigration Control and Enforcement, which works to “make it economically impossible” for employers to use undocumented labor. Over the summer, NY ICE held two demonstrations outside the Mexican Consulate to protest the government’s encouragement of immigration to the United States, which he called an “act of war.”

After hearing about the Gilchrist invitation in August, Lewenberg got on the guest list and cut a check to help CUCR cover security. He said that neither he nor anyone from his group partook in the violence, but recognized a few people from other anti-immigrant groups who did. Their response was impolitic, he said, but not unjustified: the Minutemen supporters were trying to protect Gilchrist and stepping in where Columbia security had failed.

The spring of 2006 marked a shift for the Columbia University College Republicans. It had nearly died during the Clinton years, its membership remained a fraction of the size of the Democrats, and its last five presidents were self-described moderates. Several board members had recently left and the club ran few major events.

They held their executive board elections in a small classroom in Hamilton. Kulawik, the sandy-haired president of the C4, imbued the room with a sense of purpose and promised to bring the likes of Ann Coulter and Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum. (He wasn’t always so outgoing—one high school classmate described him as reserved, “the awkward ideologue in the corner,” devotedly reading Ayn Rand.) Kulawik won in a landslide.

The new leadership searched for speakers who would focus on one of three issues: immigration, Israel/Palestine, or the midterm elections. Forty invitations went out over the summer, and they ended up with Gilchrist, ex-PLO terrorist-turned evangelical Israel hawk Walid Shoebat, and Santorum, who cancelled after news of his invitation was leaked to the Bwog.

Big names cost big money. The CUCR has previously relied on funds from the New York College Republicans, academic departments, conservative think tanks and, sometimes, individual member contributions—last year, a C4 member stepped in with $10,000 to pay for Ashcroft. Kulawik’s ability to tap both the university and the conservative establishment for money has helped engender loyalty and admiration among conservatives and Republicans. It’s making the Democrats, with four times the membership of CUCR, look like the real minority on campus. Their largest event last year, according to Nadler, was a protest of the Ashcroft speech.

Campus groups are divided over how to understand the protest and its aftermath. For Chicano students, it was about immigration and the brutality of the Minutemen. “A lot of people not close to this topic don’t understand,” said Beltran, a Chicano Caucus member from Dallas. “They don’t know what the real situation is. You don’t have a personal experience in that.”

But for the administration, the media, and members of student government, the real issue is free speech. President Bollinger, First Amendment scholar, set the tone in his statement of October 6, which chastised the protesters for disregarding the “sacrosanct and inviolable principle” of allowing all views to be heard. The Student Governing Board, the University Senate Student Affairs Committee, and the Engineering Student Council all issued similar statements.
Bollinger neither condemned the views of the Minutemen nor their supporters' actions—in contrast to the harsh language Bollinger used when Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was invited to speak in September. Some students of color took this as just another example of a lack of administrative concern for them. "He cares more about Fox News, Mayor Bloomberg, popular opinion, than the voices of the people who have been marginalized at this school," said Jennifer Oki, C'07, co-coordinator of the United Students of Color Council.

Provost Brinkley said that while "anyone who knows either of us [him and Bollinger] can't imagine that we admire the message of the Minute­men," Gilchrist never actually had a chance to deliver it at Columbia. And, if Bollinger expressed his opinions too often, "it can itself become a stifling factor in the kind of speech we permit in a university."

"We don't have a speech code as some universities do," Brinkley said. "And people will be offended, and I understand that, and that's the price we pay."

On October 10, President Bollinger called a meeting with the undergraduate governing boards and student councils to discuss the "issues of free speech within an academic environment." One of the main matters discussed was the Community Principles Initiative, a social contract of sorts now under development that administrators and student leaders often advance as a solution to controversies such as the MEALAC incident of two years ago and more recent hate crimes. Leaders of cultural groups were not contacted.

Garcia has since spoken at rallies and forums from Union Square to Washington Heights. Reflecting, she said she wished she could have said all of what she came to say earlier. It all seemed like too much, too fast. Her quiet frustration grew as we sat talking.

"We have to work fucking two jobs, borrow, get used shit, deal with school...Now on top of that, we have to deal with the national media," Garcia said, by "we" meaning Chicano students.

There's a sense of muted outrage as she describes what went on that night, in contrast to how it came out in the media. She got up on the Lerner ramps and began acting out how Kulawik had kicked Martin Lopez (after hours of reviewing the Univision tape that she offered as ironclad evidence I remain unconvinced of this accusation). The NYPD did not move forward with charges against the Minutemen supporters because there was no officer present. Gilchrist, Corsi, and Stewart continue to speak at universities. Immigrants are still intimidated at the border and in Bergenfield, NJ, where local groups picket day laborer pickup sites. At Columbia, it's a little harder for student groups to put on events—Chicano Caucus was forced to use over half its budget for security at a conference it ran two weeks after the protest, and after 115 RSVPed guests were turned away from the CUCR-sponsored speech by Walid Shoebat on October 11, guest lists must now be submitted 48 hours in advance. It's shaken things up.

I asked Garcia what she'll do after she graduates.

"I might just start an anti-Minutemen project," she replied.
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2007

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Lords of the Cubicle

Department Administrators and the university that needs them

BY LENORA BABB

Professors like to think they're the stars of the university, but in every department there is someone else: someone who counsels students, organizes special functions, serves on committees, and handles confidential information like professors' grant spending, salary, and tenure applications. You might not know these people, mundanely titled department administrators, but without them Columbia could not function.

To call Joy Hayton the matriarch of a swollen, motley family of over-educated adults only begins to describe her job. For 26 years, Hayton has served as the departmental administrator (DA) for English and Comparative Literature, watching the comings and goings of professors, students, and four university presidents. Things have changed a lot since she arrived. "It's an astonishing thing if you think about it," she said, "and I try not to think about it."

Hayton arrived in 1980 as a "secretary," but her position has grown beyond that. She is the caring human being behind the scenes of an intimidating bureaucracy, helping students get their bearings. Her office on the sixth floor of Hamilton is strewn with photographic glimpses of her life—here she is, slightly younger, a bright green parrot perched on her shoulder; now smiling on a gray beach next to bulging brown lumps of sea lions; and again, arm in arm with a blue-robed student on the steps of Low.

"Joy?" says Professor Michael Seidel when I ask him about Hayton. "She's the lifeblood. I go to her if something goes right, if something goes wrong ... I just figure she's the source in this department."

On Hayton's wall hangs a certificate she earned at a leadership conference in 1991, where she and other DAs formed an informal group that met regularly. Though academic disciplines have become more and more alienated from one another, that group has stayed close. The three remaining members of
the old guard still get lunch together to socialize and let off steam.

All current DAs also meet officially once a month. These include Bill Dellinger, the cheery anchorman of the Department of Germanic Languages and self-described “jack of all trades.” Hundreds of tiny figurines, toys, and souvenirs cover his desktop, a whimsical army of kitsch commanded by a giant silver squirrel. The squirrel, a Mexican sombrero roped to its shiny neck in a display of rodent machismo, is the only piece he bought himself; the others are gifts from friends, ranging from a miniature Punxatawney Phil to a marzipan elephant in a plastic cube.

Eccentricity is the rule among Columbia’s DAs, and none seems to have the staid background of a career bureaucrat. Physics administrator Lalla Grimes graduated magna cum laude with a degree in art history from Mount Holyoke, received a Fulbright to study Venetian Renaissance landscape painting in Italy, and ended up administrating the physics department in 1998, by way of Casa Italiana. Of her own role, Grimes says, “Department administrators have been called the synapses of the university.”

Others came to Columbia as students and never left. Dellinger first came as a graduate student in ancient philosophy. Gerry Visco, of the Classics department, has received degrees in Italian, writing, and journalism from Columbia.

Dropping by the Classics department office on Halloween, I find a tall blonde nurse-cum-dominatrix in white vinyl. It’s Gerry Visco, the DA with three Columbia degrees.

In the Classics department on Halloween, I find a tall blonde nurse-cum-dominatrix in white vinyl. It’s Gerry Visco, the DA with three Columbia degrees.

Visco is currently studying to be a yoga teacher and writing sex and restaurant reviews for the NY Press. Before she came to the university, she was an actress, claiming an appearance in Woody Allen’s Stardust Memories. “I have a very festive attitude,” says Visco, and looking at her photos on Facebook, when she friends me, post-meeting, I come to see that the nurse outfit does not deviate too much from her typical attire. Visco feels that many people at Columbia are “kind of dweeby.”

“I call them gender-neutral,” she says of the academics she works with. “The men are like women and the women are like men.”

It’s easy for DAs like Visco and Dellinger, in small departments, to make their jobs personal. It’s harder for people like Louise Peterson, administrator of the biology department—one of the largest, most highly funded departments in Arts & Sciences. Her office is bare of ornamentation, save one framed picture, and a beautiful view of the back of Low Library. Her biggest lament is people who don’t appreciate deadlines, and she presides over a large team of department staff.

Sometimes department politics get touchy. Jessica Rechtschaffer, DA of the Middle East Languages and Cultures (MEALAC) Department, eyes me suspiciously as I appear in the doorway of her office, until I assure that I want to talk about her and not about that. The conversation turns to the skis she keeps in the corner of her office, which she uses in Riverside Park, and she heartily urges me to try it. Like many of her colleagues she began in a different field, in her case medieval studies.

The DAs are often overlooked or misunderstood, but their daily struggles and triumphs shape everything that happens in our academic world. At the end of my meeting with Grimes, Professor Aron Pinzuk burst breathlessly into the office: “I’m meeting with the committee and they have questions only you can answer!” Grimes gently smiled and promised to be in momentarily.
DIGITALIA COLUMBIANNA

These excerpts were culled from documents left on Columbia's lab computers. We encourage our readers to submit their own digitalia finds to us, via e-mail, at theblueandwhite@columbia.edu.

Back to Jews!
Quick hide! It is the Grinch and our dad's boss, Mr. Ebenezer Scrooge!
Scrooge and Grinch scene – NO MAKE OUT YET!!!
Kids come out . . . of hiding! And tell Grinch and Scrooge to come . . . with them!
Starts to feel like Wizard of Oz a little, but NOT TOO MUCH!

Does Pandion know Tereus well enough to entrust Philomela in his hands? Being a male, he should be aware of the erotic voracities of his gender.

Indeed, it is through his New Jersey style that he grasps the immediate and physical power of language, thereby artfully expressing something essential about human relationships, grief, and pain.

Art is existent and one does not know if the "Masterpieces" of today may not make a blimp on the screen of important art works tomorrow.

Edna was a bright, tenacious child, who was wise beyond her years and seemed an old soul. But these traits went mostly unnoticed by her peers, who focused, instead, on the fact that she dressed rather strangely, and sometimes smelled a little bad, like stale cigarettes and unclean clothes.

Santa arrives! With Elf! Awkward silence. Elf walks past Santa and waves enthusiastically to everybody. Santa goes to bar. Everyone follows him with their heads and eyes and hips and dicks. Santa's like whoa people, chill out. Jack gives a signal "not yet, give him a sec".

Even something as delicious as fluid neck joints couldn't release her from the previous week's events.

Some I know about already (like the cute blonde waiting in Vancouver) some I don't (like tweekers, car chases, Vets with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, pot farmers, wanderers, bears, guns and most-immediate, a drunken Sioux hitchhiker named—I shit you not—Wannape-kunnuga Wonk-hodo-punnuga rambling around Minnesota somewhere just east of the Mississippi River).

I massage the layers of skin that hang off his face, making him look like a pug. He hasn't been shaven for the last week. I can tail as my fingers scratch against the flecks of whit hard that blanket his baby skin. I can't tell the last time he took a bath.

Once the Iraqi puppet government anchored itself with support of its peers, it attempted to sever the invisible hand of their master and hoped to observe it fall by gravity. However, the master lit a match above the puppet's head with its fingers.

He used to be rotund. I could place a cup of hot chai and its matching saucer on his stomach.

Jesus and Santa have awkward talk, Jesus tries to cheer Santa up but it turns into a war of commercialism. Santa gets even more down in the dumpies.

This express bridge seems to ignore the immense period of time in between in which lies the potential universal substance.
She had given her cat to a former lover. All of her sneakers had flattened backs. She had lost track of her weight. And she couldn’t remember the last time she had gone to the movies. Her stiff neck also served as a scapegoat when Sarah wouldn’t do.

Boney M.’s *Rasputin* song is a classic disco song that was a very popular in the late 1970s. It is possible to discuss *Rasputin* in the context of Charles Keil’s theory of participatory discrepancies, but it is not necessarily easy to do so in a rigorous manner. However, it is undeniable that there is something that makes the song very contagious, and one reason might be because the music is “full of discrepancies, both ‘out of time’ and ‘out of tune’.” Whenever the song reaches the end, I am more than ready to say, in my own accent and voice, “oh those Russians.”

Even if killing someone is legally acceptable, it may not always be wise. The use of violence suffers political costs that must always be considered. Just because one has a hammer does not mean every problem should be treated like a nail.

1) Mrs. Claus – Come on big guy, you make kids so happy once a year. Once. A year. Which isn’t enough. And I know that. Because we only have sex once a year I can’t do this.

She is reminiscent of a place with a whiff of organic scent, places like a prairie, a forest

In writing this essay, “The Sweatshop Sublime” by Bruce Robbins would be my first seed text choice. This text is lush with descriptions of valid issues that, although I cannot connect on a personal level, I feel as though obligated to address these issues; and, through my writing, give the world a new and valid perspective on the sweat shops. In addition, I agreed with many of the points made by Bruce.

Motion to approve E. Cooper’s request to build a *succah* *(a hut for Jewish religious purposes)* in the south parking lot, to have L. Robertson check electrical connections for safety purposes, and to have E. Cooper send an email to the general membership reminding them that nothing may be written on the external walls of the *succah*.

6) Tree – You wanna know why I fucking hate Christmas? Everybody’s always grabbing me and being like “oh is it real?” How the fuck do you think that makes me feel?

The transvestite with his dog does not desire our pity.

Growing up merely thirty miles away in a small suburban town of New Jersey, I longed “to be a part of it – New York, New York.”

However, looking through the lens of the television show 24, one realizes that torture can be effective.

Elf says something retarded, tries to leave triumphantly, comes back in covered in snow and even more triumphant and is like “It’s snowing!!!!”

*ELF motif: “IT’S A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE!”

Jew Dad wants to be Jesus’s new rep since he’s going to have an open slot soon (not like a vagina slot)

Jew Dad’s possible name:
Bob Crachitstein
Ari Gold
Ari Gelt

Augustine takes this really authoritarian view when he writes.

An indistinguishable smell looms; is it the aura of melon, caramel maybe, or perhaps just the smell of tobacco?

I disagree with his conclusions.
Soap Dispensable

When The Blue and White discovered that CTV was launching a new soap opera, The Gates, we rued the limitations of our medium. We too want sex! Emo! Technicolor! But we can merely imagine how the script of a Columbia’d-out The OC would look.

SCENE 1

GAVIN PISTOL, innocent square-jawed quarter­back, is sitting on the bed of leggy Stressbuster KELLY LANYOVICH.

GAVIN
It sure is nice of you to offer a shoulder massage.

KELLY
(smoldering) You’ve got a very important shoulder. (touching his shoulders)
Ooh, so much tension.

GAVIN
I know. I shouldn’t worry about my classes so much.

KELLY
Let me help you unwind.

GAVIN
Um.

KELLY
Yeah?

GAVIN
Jeez-louise, Kelly, haven’t you heard that consent is sexy?

KELLY
But is it (raises eyebrow) sexiest? Now shut up and kiss me!

GAVIN
No!...I don’t want to. And you have a boyfriend!

KELLY
Carlos? I don’t want Carlos, I want Gavin Fistol.

GAVIN
Carlos has been really nice to me. Even though I’m competing for his job, he even sent me to you, his Stressbuster girlfriend, ’cause I was having a hard time.

KELLY
(insistent) His mistake!

GAVIN:
I may be from Scarsdale, America, but I think this is a setup! He told you to se-
duce me, just so I’d be too distracted to perform on the football field!

KELLY:
(frantic) What? No! Wh-what? (her face twitches and her eyes turn red) Negative! System overload! Cannot compute!

KELLY’s head explodes in a burst of steel and sparks.

GAVIN
Robot?! A robot! (turning away, raising fist) She must have refused to seduce me, so Carlos turned her into a robot to make her do it!

KELLY
(robot voice coming out of a speaker in neck) But I...always...wanted to...human-love you. But I am just a...robot.

GAVIN
Damn you, Carlos! (smoldering, turns to leave) I gotta go to class.

SCENE 2

ELIZABETH PU, leggy gumshoe Spec reporter, is snooping through the dorm-room desk of square-jawed DEX DAVIAN-WEINSTEIN, unscrupulous candidate for sophomore class president. Suddenly DEX enters.

DEX
Hwa! What is the meaning of this?!

ELIZABETH
Hello, Dexter. Just looking for that pen you borrowed after our last (raises eyebrow) interview.

DEX
Walks to window, contemplates skyline, turns his head back toward her over his shoulder.

ELIZABETH
Don’t fuck with me, Davian-Weinstein.

DEX
Fine, have it your way, Pu.

DEX walks to bookshelf, contemplates books, turns his head back toward her over his shoulder.

ELIZABETH
You think I’m putting up unapproved posters and you want to splatter my guts across your front page.

DEX
Then where are they coming from, Dex? Are students so impressed with your chicanery that they made them on their own?

DEX walks to wall, contemplates wall, turns his head back toward her over his shoulder.

DEX
Chicanery, you say? I don’t know who ran over the subway party with that bus. I was on my yacht, and you of all people can (raises eyebrow) verify my alibi. And perhaps my future constituents already like me enough to poster for me. You certainly thought I was...what was your word? (raises other eyebrow) “impressive.”

ELIZABETH slaps DEX, spinning his head 360 degrees. Metallic sparks fly from his neck.

DEX
Please let yourself out of my suite. And here’s a headline for your paper: The sophomore class are belong to us!

ELIZABETH
You mean a quote?

DEX
No. And put it in that I raised my fist when I said it. Goodbye, Pu. Goodbye all of you.

ELIZABETH
Damn you, robots! (smoldering, turns to leave) I gotta go to class.

Illustrations by Carly Hoogenyk

November 2006
Daniel Okrent has been a top editor at Esquire, Life, and Time, but he's best known for his 18-month stint from 2003 to 2005 as the first Public Editor of The New York Times. His articles from that job have recently been compiled into a book, Public Editor Number One. Blue and White staffer Brendan Ballou talked with Mr. Okrent about getting rejected from Columbia Journalism School, fighting Times Executive Editor Bill Keller, and how to be happy.

B&W: So how were you picked as the first Public Editor of the Times if you had no newspaper experience?

DO: I say I was the unwanted love child of [former Executive Editor] Howell Raines and [disgraced reporter] Jayson Blair. They were compelled to create this position as a result of the Blair scandal, and there was a dispute internally about whether it should be a Times person or an outsider. The outside faction won and the question became whether the person should have newspaper background or not. And the feeling, as I found out after the fact, was that they would have preferred someone with a newspaper background, but they found me.

B&W: Were you always going to be a journalist?

DO: When I was a kid I knew I wanted to be a journalist. I applied to three schools. To Michigan because my brother and sister had gone there and my father had gone there and it was the obvious place for everyone in my high school to go there. And I applied to Northwestern because of the Medill school and its reputation. And I applied to Columbia Journalism School. I was such a naive Midwestern kid I didn’t know you needed an undergraduate degree to go to the journalism school.

B&W: When you started at the Times, was it a whole world against you?

DO: There were moments in the beginning when it
felt like that. But I think that was more paranoia on my part. What happened was that in time they realized that no matter what I wrote on Sunday it was still their paper. [Executive Editor Bill] Keller would go to people I wrote about and say, "That's just Okrent, he's not speaking for me, I still love you, and the way you do your work."

B&W: Was it a good cop, bad cop relationship?

DO: No, no, because there was no coordination between us except on one or two very rare and odd instances. What mattered, he said to his people, was, "It's not what Okrent says that matters, it's what I think about you. Now what Okrent says, I may agree with at times, but the fact that he's saying it means nothing."

B&W: You've said the Times is an unhappy place.

DO: Yes, by its nature I think it's unhappy. You know, you start in the newspaper business in some small-town newspaper in Amarillo, Texas. And if you're really good, if you're the star at Amarillo, you get noticed, you get hired at the Dallas Morning News. If you're a star there you get hired by the L.A. Times or the Chicago Tribune, and if you're a star there they notice you and you get hired to come to The New York Times. And you crawl your way to the top and you get this thing you've been dreaming about your entire career and you get to the top and there are 1,200 people just like you and you're not special any longer. There are people devoted to the Times and there are people devoted to their careers and the ones who are devoted to their careers I think are largely unhappy.

B&W: Who's devoted to the Times?

DO: It's a different personality type that says, "I'm here for the institution, I'm not here for me." And then they can be unhappy if things go bad for the Times. And a lot of things have gone badly for the Times in the last several years.

B&W: I'm wondering about objectivity—how can a reporter be objective without being a stenographer?

DO: I think objectivity is a false god. Fairness is the goal. I think fairness is about weighing both sides and including in your report those things that are relevant to a reader's understanding of both sides, which is different from saying, "One side says the moon is a [satellite], and the other side says it's made of green cheese," and making them equal. There are ways of indicating what the other party believes without endorsing it or giving it equal weight. I think this is clearest in the coverage of evolution and intelligent design. It's not that "while some people believe that the earth was formed billions of years ago by the fusion of elements and little beings climbing out of the primordial soup, the other side believes the world was created in seven days as the Bible explains it." To me evolution's true and you present it as fact. There are people who resist that fact, they call it intelligent design.

And I think that's the case for example of whether or not to use the term genocide in the case of the Armenian Turks in the 1910s. There is a historical record that established that to my satisfaction, and to the satisfaction of The New York Times, that it was a genocide. There are Turks who say it was not. That's balance. That's fair. But there was a genocide.

B&W: Do you think this kind of equality was made possible by the Iraq War?

DO: The reaction to the Iraq War was probably something of an accelerant but this is something that's been going on for quite a few years, a slow moving towards a sense of self confidence where you know you can call a spade a spade. We have to give the diamonds, clubs and hearts their day, but call a spade a spade. That's just evolutionary.

B&W: What about an issue where balance is really difficult—like Israel?

DO: It's a constant struggle. People were writing in saying, "Why are you running more pictures of weeping Lebanese [than Israelis]?” The editors it turns out had done a very careful calculation that nine times as many Lebanese were killed as Israelis, so they ran nine times as many pictures [of Lebanese]. And [Okrent's successor Byron "Barney" Calame] said it's not the role of the newspaper to make moral decisions about what is morally higher than another, and I agree with him on that. It's not a question of morality; it's a question of fairness.
B&W: Then did you feel your job was futile?

DO: Well, on certain things. One thing I say is that if you ever have the opportunity to be public editor of the Times, don’t do it during an election campaign. I do get people to acknowledge that if it’s an issue that you care a great deal about, that which you read in the newspaper which confirms your viewpoint is fact, and that which challenges your viewpoint is bias. If you see a picture of a smiling John Kerry on the Times, you don’t even notice it if you’re a Kerry supporter, because that’s the world as you see it. And the next day if there’s a picture of a smiling George Bush on the cover you say, “Bias, bias, bias, you’re pushing the Bush campaign.” And you say to that person, “Well, what about the picture of Kerry yesterday?” and they say, “What picture of Kerry yesterday?” You don’t notice that which confirms your beliefs.

B&W: You were very assertive against Paul Krugman. Do you ever talk to the guy?

DO: No. Though I have to say if I saw Paul Krugman tomorrow we would probably be more cordial than I would be with many of Krugman’s supporters who see me as the devil incarnate.

B&W: So what’s the Times doing wrong about anonymous sources?

DO: What they were doing, the old policy—explaining why the person asked for anonymity—did lead to some very bad paragraphs. “He asked for anonymity because he didn’t want his name in the paper.” It became kind of a lifeless trope. So they got rid of that. There’s another guy at the Times who wished it was not why the person asked for anonymity, but why the person was granted anonymity. So put the burden on the paper itself. If that’s the case you’ll get a much greater sense of how this works. “Was for anonymity because he worked the Democratic caucus and we needed a quote to balance the Republican caucus.” Then you’re revealing something about motivation, and you’re also revealing how you’re doing your newsgathering, and maybe if you do that too often you’ll stop doing that because it’s kind of embarrassing. You know, we needed to get the Republican comment because the Democrats were on the record and the Republicans wouldn’t go on the record and it would be unfair not to have a Republican. No, it isn’t unfair — if they didn’t want to go on the record, fuck at that point. That’s the policy I wish we had. You see less anonymous quotations in the soft features section of the paper.

B&W: There are anonymous quotes in the soft features?
DO: I wrote one of my columns about them. The story was about what are the various demands the star performers make about what they want in their dressing room. You know, one person who worked backstage said that there should be pink rose petals on the floor of her bathroom. Well, who said this? They can’t say. It was ridiculous—the world would not have stopped in its orbit if we did not know this about Barbra Streisand. I mean, we still don’t know it.

B&W: What do you regret?

DO: Oh, I paid too much attention to my critics. I was a little obsessed about what people were saying about me. I’m not certain about this but there was a certain amount of triangulation and sail-trimming, you know, “the left’s mad at me and the right’s happy, so maybe I should do something for the left.” Or “Israelis like me too much, so now I have to do something to show that I’m fair to the Palestinians as well.” I was so determined to try to make everybody happy.

B&W: Don’t you think you got that?

DO: Not to the Krugman-ites.

B&W: Did you ever lose sleep over your columns?

DO: Oh yeah, a lot, a lot.

B&W: This is a form of performance. Were you tied up in knots the day before your column ran?

DO: No, with a couple of exceptions, a couple of highly sensitive exceptions where I was being extremely critical of people I admired or people who had been very, very helpful to me. Early on, if I wrote something critical I would be fearful—no, not fearful—I would be hesitant to go into the newsroom Monday. I got over that. I used to be a baseball writer, and as a baseball writer I know a guy who works for the Globe, who says that if he criticizes somebody he has the obligation to show up in the locker room the next day and take whatever shit they throw at him. And I came around to being able to do that, but it took me a while.

B&W: Do you ever miss your job at the Times?

DO: There are moments when I miss it. There are a few things I miss, primarily when there is something that’s so juicy, like the Duke Lacrosse team or [Times court reporter] Linda Greenhouse this week. The other thing I miss about it is to be as frank as possible, I miss the audience. There’s nothing like having a regular column. As Paul Krugman knows, to have a regular column in the Times is to have a following. I’m not suggesting my following is nearly as loving, as devoted as Krugman’s. I mean, he’s a rock star. I’ve written cover stories in major American magazines. Nothing compares to a regular, repeating slot in The New York Times. And so I miss that. And then third there are many people there that I miss, and I miss the engagement on many issues, and I miss—this will really sound awful—I miss being able to help people who have solid complaints. By this I mean as much people on staff as people off-staff.

B&W: You invented rotisserie baseball. Do you still play?

DO: Yeah, I play a reduced version called AARP. We have very little trading, you pick a team early in the season and then watch it. I’ve still never won.

B&W: Will that be your lasting legacy?

DO: Well at the Times that’s been my joke—my wife says I took the job so that my obituary won’t just say, “Okrent dies, invented rotisserie baseball.” It will now say, “Okrent dies, first public editor of the Times, also invented rotisserie baseball.”

—Brendan Ballou
Verily cannot believe the mid-autumnal edition of his monthly self-immolation will commence with... the weather. Discussion of the clime possesses a trite convenience that makes it impossible to broach, an impossibility that is then alchemized back into convenience. To begin a philosophical rumination with a discussion of the weather—rather, to begin a philosophical rumination with a discussion of the banality of beginning a philosophical rumination with a discussion of the weather—is just so opportunistic, so aspiring, so Antwerp. What Verily means to say is: have you noticed how much it's been raining?

There is no use repeating the potential benefits of the recurrent torrent to farmers or firemen or impure sophomores from the School of Mines. Nor is there any point to addressing the root cause of God's unseasonable seasoning: Verily saw Al Gore's talking picture, too—going was perhaps the sixth or seventh most inconvenient thing Verily has ever done for the calloused nest of woman-hand. The High Modernist, it appeared, had seen fit to anoint October as the crudest month.

But not all thirty-one days of it. Recently, seeing that it was a soft October afternoon, Verily decided to steer his trusty velocipede about this campus he has called home these past 115 years—with apologies to Riga, which, with its gorgeous Baltic setting and cheap Baltic libations, nonetheless has all too much snow and syphilis to put Verily at ease. One would suppose that the ladies of the Heights, however once lithe and virile, would be somehow marred, corrupted by the basic cynicism engendered by jargon, problematics, metatexts, commodification, organic chemistry; but no. Instead, when a certain deconstruction does take place, it sublimes, it glorifies. All that is profane? Sacred. All that is theory? Practice. All that is youthful? Legally permitted (in this state). And all ugly coats, as it has been achingly noted? Yes, dear reader, Foucoats.

Verily glanced at the passersby left and right, desperately trying to invest them with the capacity and desire to look back with some hint of elegant desire. This city, after all, is the naked one. Overwhelmed by the beauty of his effort's futility, Verily dismounted his 'pede, and shivered the sweet chill of abandonment that only a woman-hand could abate.

Splash! Verily grimaced with the cold shock of an ingathered bog. He had stepped in a puddle.

The poetic muse long ago deserted Verily, the victim of an overdose in youthful experimentation. (It was the '20s, and we thought anything—flapping, Soviet Communism, enjambment—was possible.) So he asks you, when you shall these unlucky deeds relate, to imagine flopping, without mind, into a pool of dirty rainwater about two inches deep while wearing your finely knit gray wool houndstooth socks. The weaved touch of fabric gives way to the numb fear of a sailor's sickness, of an amputation before voyage ends.

Yet all was not lost—we have discussed the Columbian ability to change the bad to the good—and Verily, veritably limping home, procured no less than three phone numbers from sympathetic nymphs he met along the way (well—only two were women). Longing for a good pet, they must have eyed him as a lost pup who need only a good shake to be rid of his excess moisture. Or else they took pity. Regardless, rotary in hand, Verily is bringing sexy back (okay, only one was a woman). 'Twill be rain tonight? Let it come down.

—Verily Veritas
If A Tree Falls On College Radio, Does Anyone Hear It?
By Sasha de Vogel

I’m sitting in the WBAR studio on the lower level of Macintosh Hall. I’m playing the best, most cutting-edge music I can find. For two hours every week, I am not Sasha de Vogel, but Sasha D, half of a DJ duo holding listeners prisoner to their radios—or computer speakers, more likely, since the WBAR signal can’t be picked up outside of the Barnard quad.

But even if no one’s listening, someone still cares what I play: CMJ Network Inc., the unofficial governing body of college radio. Other than the CMJ Music Marathon that takes over New York City clubs for a few days every fall (this year, October 31 through November 4) most people, even WBAR DJs, don’t know what CMJ does, or even that it stands for College Music Journal.

CMJ compiles all the new music played at almost 900 college radio stations and publishes the dozen resulting charts in the weekly CMJ New Music Report. They run reviews of albums before they drop and profile artists before they’ve even been signed. They’ve probably interviewed the band you’re going to fall in love with in six months in their other magazine, the more consumer-oriented CMJ New Music Monthly. That band has probably already played at their Marathon, twice.

The New Music Report is a trade magazine; it’s unlikely that even the hippest hipster is going to browse through a copy of it, although the charts are printed every two weeks in the back of Rolling Stone. The people who do read it—scouts, journalists, college radio music directors, and especially
promoters—are the people who matter for new bands.

A band or label employs a promoter to push its albums to radio stations and handle press. Promotion comes at a steep price—around $1,000 a month on the cheaper end—and bands that can’t afford it don’t have anyone sending free CDs and records to stations, and thus aren’t getting airplay before their albums are released.

WBAR doesn’t have the money to buy 50 or even 10 new records a week, and neither does almost every other college radio station in the country. Instead, they rely on freebies bestowed by the promoters. In short, the stations need the promoters to be able to play music and the promoters needs the stations to play their music. It seems like a happy symbiosis, but it depends totally on a third party—CMJ.

Chris Baio, C’07, and Chas Carey, C’08, are the college rock directors at WBAR. They sort through up to 100 albums per week, deal with nagging promoters who want their artists to move up in the charts, and process the new acquisitions. When I asked Baio how he chooses what to add, he told me it’s often a “superficial choice” based on cover art, press releases, a few minutes of listening, and a feeling of what the DJs will want to play. As for unsigned or unpromoted bands? “There is a glimmer of hope, but it’s unlikely,” he said.

In the short time I talked with Baio and Carey, one of them was almost always on the phone with a promoter, answering questions such as what kind of play Citizen Cope and Pete Yorn were getting (low and moderate, respectively). The promoters aren’t just curious—they mail copious amounts of free music to improve their clients’ positions on the CMJ charts.

The relationship between free CDs and the life of a college station is so rigid that when the summer managers of WBAR forgot to renew the $400 subscription to CMJ, they had to lie to every promoter they talked to so the station wouldn’t fall apart. Baio admits that he knows pretty much nothing about CMJ or who reads its publications. He just knows that it’s vital.

You could argue CMJ’s power has taken the focus away from the music. Sam Skarstad, Skidmore ’08, a music director at Skidmore College’s WSPN upstate, admits, “There’s a lot of schmoozing with promoters and it can obstruct a reading on the music.” Carey acknowledges the benefits of the system, even as he bemoans it: “I’m glad CMJ exists because it means promoters have to pay attention to college stations, but it’s not the location for unsigned bands to be heard.”

Baio, who plays bass in two bands, The Midnight Hours and Vampire Weekend, knows all about this disadvantage. “No matter how talented you are, there’s a threshold of how much you’re willing to pay,” he sighs. To Carey, CMJ forces independent music to sell out. “CMJ is about everything else but college radio,” he said.

His words would cut Robert Haber to the core. Haber founded CMJ in 1978 when he worked at Brandeis University’s WBRS. He saw that the station had, in his words, “limited resources and limited power, but an enormous community impact.” CMJ would form an alliance among independent radio stations to counter the power of corporate providers. Then, as now, CMJ was meant to make college radio matter in an industry that tends not to care about it. He still believes, he told me, that it exists to advocate for college radio, to make the most of “the greatest opportunity to use public airwaves.”

Haber sounds offended when he hears the criticism that CMJ serves major labels by offering up a picked-over platter of the most marketable indie music. CMJ is “simply an information provider,” he said, designed to show what people want to hear.

I point out that the charts don’t represent what college kids as a whole are listening to so much as what a handful of DJs want to hear. To Haber, though, the people who DJ college radio shows are the people who love music the most, so the charts actually tabulate what the 50,000 “tastemakers”—Haber’s estimation of the number of college DJs—
are interested in playing.

Whether or not the motley crew of WBAR DJs can be considered influential, the community of college DJs does function kind of like a giant test market for new music. Carey cited a phone call he received from a high school junior who was surprised and thrilled to hear a certain song on the radio. “This is where things catch on,” Skidmore’s Skarstad says of the college new music scene.

Skarstad would know, because he’s currently experiencing the process firsthand. He and his friend Jamie Ayers formed the band Snakes Say Hiss! about a year ago and started honing their brand of stripped-down electronic pop. They played shows on campus and built up a pretty good fanbase, with help from WSPN.

Because Skarstad is a music director, he constantly works with promoters, one of whom—Terrorbird, which deals predominately with college stations and whose roster includes English hip-hop queen Lady Sovereign and Brooklyn’s experimental, melodic Grizzly Bear—asked to hear his band. Skarstad sent over the album they’d recorded under their record label, Famous Class, which they had formed with two other bands and the support of an art commune in California. Terrorbird loved it. Snakes Say Hiss! and friends burned and silk-screened about 400 CDs. With Terrorbird’s help, they debuted at number 105 on the CMJ charts in September, and rose to 77 the next week.

The whole process “really gave me faith in college radio,” Skarstad said. “It’s fun to see our name among the heavy hitters. We’re doing battle with John Mayer and the Mars Volta.” He adds that being on the charts is “something we can show our parents.” Plus, they get to play the Marathon this year.

The CMJ Music Marathon is an orgiastic five-day music extravaganza held every fall in New York. This year it features around 1,400 bands (about 20% of those that applied) playing in 60 venues, more than 100 panels on current issues in music, a film festival, “College Day” devoted to issues in college radio, and endless industry networking parties. Ostensibly, it’s a festival for college radio and those involved with it, but anyone can go to the shows or buy a “badge,” which gets you into as many as you want (the student rate is $295 and the general rate is $495). Haber describes it as five days of “good vibes.”

The Marathon’s success stories are impressive. In 2003, an unsigned band from Las Vegas was discovered and signed on the spot by Island Def Jam; The Killers went on to huge mainstream success. In 2004, The Arcade Fire was “an overnight sensation,” according to Kory Grow, associate editor of the New Music Report. The biggest success of 2005 is considered to be Clap Your Hands Say Yeah, who were unsigned at the time of their show and, despite pressure to work with a label, are still unsigned in the United States. Both Grow and Haber glowingly and independently mentioned all three bands to me as proof that CMJ has something very serious to offer even the smallest acts.

On Saturday, November 4, the final day of the Marathon, Snakes Say Hiss! played the Terrorbird Showcase in the tiny basement of Fontana’s. They went on at approximately 12:20: prime brunching hour. About 45 people showed up, mostly drinking coffee instead of the free Bloody Marys. Despite nerves and the early hour, Skarstad and Ayers put on a really good show. They were both relieved and excited when it was over.

Haber estimates that the number of bands who make it thanks to the charts or the Marathon could be as low as “two or three percent,” though it has increased in recent years. Snakes Say Hiss! is probably not going to be the break-out band of this year’s Marathon. But, as Grow said, “you can’t predict something like that.”
Grand Theft Bicycle

Bully
Rockstar Games
Playstation 2
$39.99

Rockstar Games' Grand Theft Auto III is the Star Wars (Episode IV) of video games. GTA has spawned numerous sequels and brazen imitators like Saints Row and the forthcoming Crackdown, creating a new genre of "sandbox" games—a name that reflects their strengths and limitations.

The sandboxes contain vast, wide-open landscapes with few constraints, where the kid (or mass murderer) in you can get lost for hours; they are also plagued by choppy graphics and sloppy gameplay. But the style and sophistication of Bully, Rockstar's latest, proves that it's possible to think, yes, outside the sandbox.

15-year-old Jimmy Hopkins has been expelled from several schools, his mother just got married for the fifth time, and he has recently been dumped off at the worst prep school in America: Bullworth Academy. Dr. Crabblesnitch, the headmaster, rants and raves about morality but can't enforce any semblance of order. Mr. Hattrick, an administrator, sells test answers to the rich kids; Mr. Galloway, the English teacher, can't stay away from the bottle; Mr. Burton, the gym coach, enlists students to collect "dirty laundry" from the girls' dorm; and Edna, the cafeteria lady, is the stuff of nightmares. The students? Nerds, jocks, preps, greasers, and bullies embroiled in a no-holds-barred teenage total war. As Jimmy, a freckle-faced redhead with a mean stare, your job is to navigate the cliques and stir up much trouble along the way.

Although the world of Bullworth is divided into four or five factions, the characters aren't recycled archetypes (the bread and butter of GTA)—Rockstar took the time to make each of the 70 or so students unique, or at least, unique within the game's universe. Among the nerds, there's Earnest, the clean-cut dork with delusions of grandeur; Fatty, the Dungeons and Dragons nut with a cape on his back and tinfoil on his head; and Algernon, the obese bed-wetter who writes to his mother every day. There are jocks like Ted, the pretty-boy quarterback who hides behind his linemen; Damon, a gigantic, fight-picking monster with his arm in a cast; and Ivan, the foreign exchange bruiser. You'll get to know them, and, as the game progresses, they'll get to know you.

The game's technical framework (controls, interface, menus) is straight GTA, but every action has an appropriate teenage analog. Knocking kids off their bikes has replaced jacking Ferraris at gunpoint, firecrackers in toilets have replaced Molotov cocktails, and making out has replaced soliciting...
prostitutes—unlike in GTA, both girls and boys are receptive to your advances.

Rockstar didn’t advertise this last feature and it isn’t immediately apparent to the player. Its discovery echoes the “Hot Coffee” scandal, a sex mini-game in GTA: San Andreas that was inaccessible to the average thumb-jockey, but was unearthed by hackers searching through the game’s code. In GTA, Carl “CJ” Johnson can date up to six different women, and if he plays his cards right, the dates will culminate in an invite inside for coffee—read: sex. At this point, the off-the-shelf game gets suggestive; the house’s exterior appears, to the vaguely erotic sounds of muffled voices. By downloading the “Hot Coffee” mod on the PC, or hacking into the console versions, however, the player was able to enter the house and the girlfriend herself: you control an array of actions which cannot be elaborated upon in this forum. If any single event sparked Senator Clinton’s public pledge to protect America’s children from video games, this was it. Its revelation caused a re-rating of GTA, which in turn helped Rockstar’s parent company lose $28.8 million in one fiscal quarter. Naturally, cheeky gamers have dubbed the comparatively minor Bully brouhaha “Iced Latte.”

Naturally, Jack Thompson, a conservative attorney and anti-video game crusader, recently attempted to prohibit the sale of Bully to minors in Florida (incidentally, 15 years ago Thompson asked a judge to declare the entire Florida Bar Association unconstitutional because of a supposed revenge plot it was hatching against him). When the judge ruled that Bully could be sold to minors, Thompson fired back with a petulant, passive-aggressive letter that called the judge a liar; the lawyers at Take-Two Interactive, Rockstar’s parent company, swiftly filed a motion to have Thompson declared in contempt of court, and he now faces jail time (check YouTube for videos of contempt hearing hilarity).

That being said, Bully does allow you to beat an eight-year-old girl over the head with a baseball bat and pelt old ladies with bottle rockets, but, all things considered, it’s more Rebel Without A Cause than Requiem for a Dream. The PG-13 approach works. Bringing crack pipes, handguns, and AIDS into a boarding school fantasy would have killed the mischief-making that makes Bully so much fun.

Bully does allow you to beat an eight-year-old girl over the head with a baseball bat and pelt old ladies with bottle rockets.

There wouldn’t be mischief to make without rules, and a choice of whether or not to break them. Jimmy has a curfew, a dress code, and class every day (which take the form of mini-games—English is a word scramble, gym is a dodgeball match, etc.). Wear your khakis and vest, and you won’t get harassed by the prefects, but why not wear the red ninja suit you just bought? Go to shop class, and you’ll earn a better bike, but why not ride the BMX you already have into town and spray “Nerds Suck!” all over the comic store where they congregate?

The action isn’t confined to the school grounds—the sleepy northeastern town of Bullworth is an integral part of the game. Wooden docks line a lake, rich folk nestle in gated mansions at the top of a hill, and industrial wasteland sprawls on the wrong side of the train tracks. It’s not a massive game world, but it is a big and wonderfully detailed one.

A photography class assignment brought me to Old Bullworth Church, where I saw one jock standing over a tombstone, head down. The jocks hate Jimmy, picking fights and chasing him across the quad. But when I approached the jock, he didn’t look up. He kept walking down the lane, head hanging. It was a poignant moment, a rare thing for any video game, let alone one from the company famous for its numerous mass murder simulators.

A game can only cover so much, but Bully hits a sweet spot of virtual reality. More social options would have been nice—instead of joining one clique or another, the player is simply dragged through a preset story arc, which involves the systematic humiliation and physical beatdown of every kid in the school in an attempt to “stop bullying”—but the cozy universe of Bully proves that while big is good, bigger isn’t necessarily better.

—Paul Barndt
Peering through the windows, we saw antlers, a boar’s head, and a white goose in mid-flight jutting from the walls. Every table in the dimly lit room was packed with diners. There was no sign, no address, and no entrance. We had been strolling west on Rivington and, nearing Bowery, had been intrigued by the name of a side street—Freeman Alley, as a high-hanging sign informed us—that we’d never seen before. We followed it to its end, but there was no way into the restaurant. We set out from the alley and walked around the block to what I presumed to be the front door. We entered. It was not the restaurant we had seen.

Only a few months later, poking around online, would I discover what we had missed. The taxidermy-fetishizing, semi-hidden restaurant was named Freemans. The obscure location and unmarked storefront (the door is actually to the left of the window we were looking through) are relatively tame tactics compared to other new establishments that are building their customer base by pretending to hide from it. NoLita’s La Esquina, for instance, requires the eager visitor to push through a door labeled “Employees Only” inside a taquería of the same name before venturing through the kitchen. Once at the other La Esquina, you approach the hostess and she gives you the number and asks you to call for a reservation from above ground. A woman—it sounds like the same one—answers: “I’m sorry, we’re booked until 11:00.” It’s 7:30.

Walter Benjamin, quoting the novelist Régis Messac, once asked, “Is not the big city as mysterious as the forests of the New World?” That’s the eternal promise of New York: around any corner, in any neighborhood, you can discover something new—a bizarre gallery, an eccentric café, a street you’ve somehow always missed. Simply by walking and looking, you can aimlessly wander like Charles Baudelaire’s 19th century flâneur, with one catch: in the modern city, especially New York, the discovery is usually something to buy.

Actor Tim Robbins is a newcomer to selling secrets, opening The Back Room last year. Oth-
er than the black-clad bouncer looming idly on the sidewalk while talking into headset, the only clue to its presence is a metal sign labeled “Lower East Side Toy Company.” To make it through the gate, you need to make it past that very large gentleman.

On a September evening, two fellow editors of The Blue and White and I attempted to gain entry. The big man did not look pleased. “Three guys alone on a Saturday night? How old are you?” “Twenty-one!” the boldest among us answered, proudly flaunting our legality. “Minimum age is twenty-five on weekend nights,” he replied firmly. After a bit of contrived schmoozing and coaxing, we—shabbily dressed and lady friend-less—found ourselves being allowed down a dark, sub-street level walkway, up a modified fire escape, and into the 1920s-styled pseudo-speakeasy. At 1:00 in the morning, the wood-paneled hall held no more than a few dozen people. From that point forward, the number would only decline.

Benjamin accused the flâneur of being “a spy for the capitalists, on assignment in the realm of the consumers.” His role today blurs with that of the proprietor: together, they create an illusion of discovery. You visit places like The Back Room, not because you were lucky enough to find it but because everyone says you have to go, that this hulking bar posing as a speakeasy—or is it posing as a bar posing as a speakeasy?—is great, secret fun. But, of course, it’s neither secret nor fun. Once you’ve navigated through the passage to the appointed space—your Goodfellas Copacabana moment—there’s no need to go back, which may explain the incredible lack of a crowd on the Saturday night.

That’s not to say that every place that engages in such subterfuge is destined for the dustbin. Nom de Guerre, a reputed former Black Panther hangout in the East Village devoted to rare Nikes, extremely tight clothing, and books ranging from architectural theory to Wittgenstein, seems constantly abuzz with activity. Le Parker Meridien’s Burger Joint, “hidden” behind a velvet curtain in the lobby, has become a favorite of nearby corporate workers on lunch break, filled to the brim at noon. And Milk & Honey, one of the first bars to establish strict reservation and referral policies, continues to crowd with people every night, even though, as per house rules, men are not permitted to introduce themselves to women. The trick is one of the oldest: tell people they can’t come, and everyone will start jockeying for their place in line. As a means of making a first impression, it rarely fails; as a means of building a loyal clientele, it’s not much better than any other technique.

This desire for obscurity (read: exclusivity) largely occurs on the Lower East Side, in the East Village, and Williamsburg, all relatively recent conquests of gentrification. Like much of the avant-garde architecture sprouting up around the LES like startlingly out of place weeds (think Hotel on Rivington), their aesthetic experience seems to require the surrounding poverty, which lends authenticity to the ruse: the more dramatic the contrast between inside and outside, the greater the fun. They recall that Situationist slogan allegedly seen on an alley wall in Paris after the 1968 riots: “Club Med—A cheap vacation in other people’s misery.”

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**PLACES TO GO**

1. Freemans  
   End of Freemans Alley off Rivington St., between Bowery and Chrystie St.  
   F/V to 2nd Ave. and Houston St.

2. La Esquina  
   106 Kenmare St.  
   R/W to Prince St.

3. The Back Room  
   102 Norfolk St.  
   F to Delancey-Essex Sts.

4. Nom de Guerre  
   640 Broadway, Lower Level (south east corner of Bleecker intersection, down stairs)  
   N/R to Prince St.

5. The Burger Joint  
   118 W 57th St., btw. 6th & 7th Aves. (in Le Parker Meridien Hotel)  
   1 to 59th St. and Columbus Circle

6. Milk & Honey  
   134 Eldridge St., btw. Delancey and Broome Sts.  
   B/D to Grand St. or F/V to 2nd Ave. and Houston St.

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**NOVEMBER 2006**

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Is there more to Columbia television than Minuteman footage (see p. 10) and The Gates (see p. 24)? Yes. And no. Because of its low budget and high standards, CTV rarely airs extended blocks of original content. But, at the B&W's request, it broadcast close to three straight hours on a recent Friday night. We asked for six, but three proved more than enough.

8:00 p.m.: A set of male buttocks is sticking out of a bank of TVs. It's an ad for CTV. Three men talk in what appear to be three individual rooms. It's supposed to be a parody of something, I think.

8:06: Clips & Quips: "We don't take ourselves too seriously." The host says, "We'll discuss how to send your clips in later." The camera then cuts out.

8:07: Wine Wednesdays. The host, an inebriated brunette, explains why last week's episode was not taped. "Some lovely person tried to help us, but he or she forgot to press the record button."

8:25: The host deems Charlie Rose "fly," especially when "foxy older women" go on his show. She edges closer to her guest.

8:35: CTV News.

8:43: Engineering Student Council President Dan Okin says SEAS students are not just "engineering-driven and science-driven individuals. If that were the case, they would have gone to Purdue, where there's no arts requirement."

8:48: Why do people use Friday nights to study? It allows "whatever you want Saturday and Sunday nights." The two hosts then banter about the most recent CTV party. I envy the people studying on a Friday night.

8:54: The Critic Show, hosted by Michelle Fan and Emma Thome. They interview Joseph Gordon-Levitt, who advises film students to drop their cameras down John Jay stairwells.

9:30: The interview refuses to end.

9:38: Sexiled! Hosted by Vanessa Goldstein and Travis Cone. "Sadism is when you like giving pain, and masochism is when you like receiving. So they kind of get lumped together."

10:09: Apparently, autoerotic asphyxiation is a "real rush."

10:28: Vanessa: "Does your finger have that moist feeling that a tongue can give?"

10:32: Vanessa's rear takes up the entire frame as she spanks her producer.

10:36: Dead air. Followed by the same promo that aired at 8:00 p.m.

10:38: Once again, Clips and Quips! Then, the first three minutes of Wine Wednesday! The host tells us, "I'm going to be a little serious for a minute." The video cuts out and starts over. Seriously. It's happening all over again.

—Dan D'Addario
CAMPUS GOSSIP

And now, a look at some of the more illustrious job titles of some of our more illustrious faculty.

DEPARTMENT OF JOHN JACOB JINGLEHEIMER SCHMIDT:
• Robert Somerville—Ada Byron Bampton Tremaine Professor of Religion
• Ponisseril Somasundaran—LaVon Duddleson Krumb Professor of Mineral Engineering
• Walter M. Frisch—Harold Gumm/Harry and Albert von Tilzer Professor of Music

DEPARTMENT FOR THE JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH:
• Tuncel M. Yegulalp—Professor of Mining

DEPARTMENT OF LONGWINDEDNESS:
• Paul J. Anderer—Wm. Theodore and Fanny Brett de Bary and Class of 1941 Collegiate Professor of Asian Humanities and Vice Provost for International Relations
• Gareth D. Williams—Violin Family Professor in the Core Curriculum at Columbia University
• Jeanne Brooks-Gunn—Virg. and Leo. Marx Prof. of Child and Parent Dev.Ed., College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University

DEPARTMENT OF REDUNDANCY DEPARTMENT:
• Richard K. Betts—Leo A. Schifrin Professor of War and Peace Studies and Arnold A. Saltzman Professor of War and Peace Studies
• Charles Armstrong—The Korea Foundation Associate Professor of Korean Studies in the Social Sciences

DEPARTMENT OF MULTITASKING:
• Joy Hirsch—Professor of Radiology, Neurobiology, and Behavior, and Psychology

THE DEPARTMENT OF LEAVE IT TO BEAVER:
• Alice Kessler-Harris—R. Gordon Hoxie Professor of American History in Honor of Dwight D. Eisenhower
• Linda V. Green—Armand G. Erpf Professor of the Modern Corporation
• Franklin R. Edwards—Arthur F. Burns Professor of Free and Competitive Enterprise

Overheard, in anticipation of former President Clinton’s upcoming on-campus conversation with man of the moment Václav Havel:
Girl 1: “I am going to the Clinton thing and I am planning on having sex with him.”
Girl 2: “I bet he’s good.”

IT’S JUST LIKE CLEARING BRUSH.

RESOLVED: ACCIDENTAL PREGNANCY REDUCES GRADE INFLATION

Overheard on College Walk, a 30-something woman to her small child:
“Alex, if you don’t come back here right now you cannot sleep with teddy tonight! I’ll take him away!”
“You can’t do that!”
“I will take teddy away! I don’t have time for this! I have to do my Econ problem set!”

YOU CAN’T WIN A NOBEL PRIZE IN EVERYTHING

Overheard at the Sundial:
“This school is nothing—my sister started doing coke at fourteen.”

November 2006
INTERMEDIATE FENCING

At 11 p.m. one night in front of Radio Perfecto, a grad student dressed in all white and standing in front of his waiting limousine was seen smoking and talking to a middle-aged man. “Listen man,” he said, “you’re the one who said you wanted me to kill you.” Responded the gentleman, while flailing an oversized plastic sword: “I’m not afraid to die! I’m not afraid to die! I’m not afraid to die!”

On a Sunday night during the height of midterms, a girl was observed pushing a boy full-speed down the Lerner ramps in a K-Mart shopping cart as he screamed like a small child on a rollercoaster. As they enjoyed the social interactions that the ramps were designed to facilitate, everyone else in the building looked about ready to kill them.

When pressed to justify their actions, the students apologized, explaining that Barney’s doesn’t have shopping carts.

The graduate student lounge for art history, located on the sixth floor of Schermerhorn, has two doors. There is a sign on each. The first sign reads as follows: “Do not use this door, use the other door.” The second sign reads “Door knob broken, use other door.” The second doorknob is not actually broken.

Confused grad students, failing to notice this last fact, have been covertly consulting battered copies of The Da Vinci Code for the past week, determined to find a way in.

A reasonably well-aged woman who was spotted driving her black sedan up to the Amsterdam gate rolled down her window and yelled: “Excuse me! I don’t have my glasses! What street is this?”

A B&W staffer returned from the gym, swiped into McBain, and made his way to the elevator. While waiting for it to reach the ground floor, he slyly took a step back in order to observe himself in the large panel mirror. After making sure that the security guard was looking in the other direction, he began to flex his freshly-pumped biceps. A few seconds later, he heard the sound of a woman’s voice. “Don’t worry, honey. I noticed the difference.”

The staffer looked back to see the female guard watching him on the security camera’s feed. The elevator arrived, and he jumped in, but not before awkwardly responding: “Thank you, ma’am.”

Barnard’s yearbook, The Mortarboard, sent out an e-mail this month to all current seniors reminding them to have their senior portraits taken. When students called the supposed number to the portrait studio, however, they were connected with a phone sex line. The message: “I’m so glad you called. Me and my horny girlfriends can’t wait to get down and dirty with you.”

Barnard students rejoiced. Get it?! Because they’re lesbians!!!

During a recent class taught by esteemed Professor of English Edward Mendelson, students were surprised when he entered the lecture hall, told them that he had not prepared a lesson, and that he was “just gonna wing it.” The subsequent class on H.G. Wells’ Tono Bungay involved anecdotes and commentary repeated from earlier lectures, plus numerous negative comments about the book’s annotator—who was, in fact, Mendelson himself. After about an hour of winging it, Mendelson allowed his students to wing it as well—right out of class, fifteen minutes early.

Aren’t GS students adorable?

Strokos...it’s forgotten!

THE BLUE AND WHITE