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MAGAZINE



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don't
cry

Director Kimberly Peirce
takes on *Carrie*

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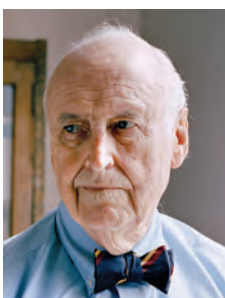
Gaiutra Bahadur '97JRN is a Guyanese-born journalist and critic who writes primarily about immigrants and refugees. She is the author of the forthcoming book *Coolie Woman: The Odyssey of Indenture*. >> [Page 53](#)



David Benefield is a professional poker player and a student in the School of General Studies, where he plans to major in Chinese and political science. A native of Fort Worth, Texas, he hopes to pursue a career in foreign policy. >> [Page 8](#)



Jason Bordoff is the director of Columbia's Center on Global Energy Policy and a professor of professional practice at the School of International and Public Affairs. He previously worked in the White House as a special assistant to the president and as senior director for energy and climate change on the staff of the National Security Council. >> [Page 10](#)



Wm. Theodore de Bary '41CC, '53GSAS, '94HON is the John Mitchell Mason Professor Emeritus, provost emeritus, and a special service professor. This semester he is teaching Asian Humanities and a second-level Core course, Nobility and Civility. He is the author, most recently, of *The Great Civilized Conversation: Education for a World Community*. >> [Page 50](#)



Victor Navasky is the George T. Delacorte Professor in Magazine Journalism at the Graduate School of Journalism. He was the editor of the *Nation* from 1978 until 1995, and its publisher and editorial director from 1995 to 2005. >> [Page 52](#)

EDWARD SOREL

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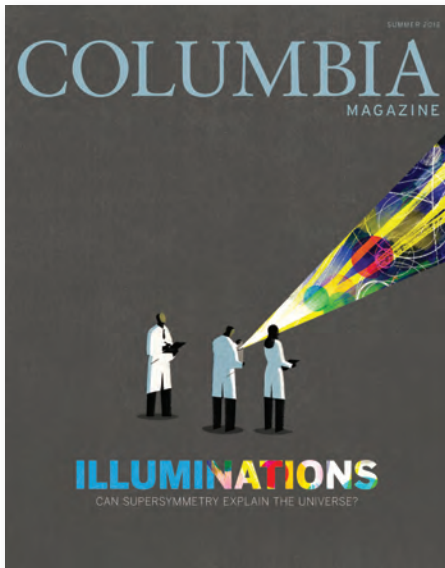
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letters

GONZO JOURNALISM

I loved the profile of Juan González (“Street-Beat Confidential,” Summer 2013). As a journalist, I write profiles; they take enormous time, thought, patience, and a true give-and-take between subject and reporter. Then there’s the writing: in this case, Paul Hond’s marvelous weave of present day, near past (9/11), past past (college, activism), *plus* the particular struggles of Puerto Rican immigrants. A life story, fully told.

Anne Moore ’82BC
Chicago, IL

As a medical student at Columbia in the early 1970s, another student and I followed Juan González and a few Young Lords to the health commissioner’s office, where Juan was extraordinary in obtaining lead-testing kits that were not being used.

Ed Weeks ’73PS
Moab, UT

THE BEHOLDER

I am almost amused by the presumably serious article that your editors define as “A jaunt through the boundless visual worlds of six young, successful Columbia artists” (“Without Walls,” Summer 2013).

I am glad to read that the artists are successful, but I fail to see beauty in their

creations. It seems that the artists aim to *épater les bourgeois*, to provide such a visual shock as to disorient and confuse the senses of what they think is a naive public. It’s the emperor’s new clothes.

Nicolas Kariouk ’61SEAS
Baton Rouge, LA

NO DEFENSE OF STATE

In your interview with Harold Brown (“To Deter and Protect,” Summer 2013), the former secretary of defense charges that “State Department people tend not to be decisive decision makers. For them, a negotiation is a success no matter what happens.” But wasn’t it a success that the Cold War never became a hot war, and communism came to an end in the Soviet Union?

Yale Richmond ’57GSAS
Washington, DC

Harold Brown’s observation that for State Department people, a negotiation is a success no matter what, applies equally to federal agencies, and even to big-company business these days. I can’t count the times I’ve heard people compliment each other on a conference call or meeting in which absolutely nothing was accomplished.

William J. Mahon
Great Falls, VA

SAVE OUR SHIP

Columbia is a terrific alumni magazine, and the College Walk section is always entertaining. However, in “The Tender” (Summer 2013), you did a disservice to readers — including GSAPP preservation professors, grads, and students — by failing to mention whether or not the *Lilac* was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Mary Habstritt is fighting the good fight, and various nonprofits (National Maritime Historical Society, Historic Naval Ships Association, etc.) and our government (National Maritime Heritage Program) work alongside Habstritt to save National Register-listed and -eligible maritime sites every day.

Kirsten Brinker Kulis ’03GSAPP, ’05GSAPP
Alexandria, VA

The Lilac is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. — Ed.

MEDIC ALERT

The College Walk article “Safe at Home” (Summer 2013) states that Columbia baseball player Joey Falcone is “a former Marine combat medic.” But how can this be, when our Marine Corps has no medical corps? Can it be that he was a Navy corpsman assigned to the Marines, as I was

LETTERS

assigned to be a battalion field surgeon with the Third Marine Division in Vietnam, though I held a Navy commission?

Those of us who served deserve a clarification on this point, and the proper military service should be given credit.

Martin Flamm '64CC
Sun City, AZ

While Falcone initially enlisted in the Navy, he served as a "corpsman," or medic, within a Marine infantry unit. — Ed.

INTERWOVEN TALES

Your College Walk article on the late Frank Lautenberg ("Army of One," Summer 2013) brought back a number of memories. Like Senator Lautenberg's father, my dad was a weaver at a silk mill in Paterson, New Jersey, and he also took me to see the inside of the factory on a few occasions.

I was fourteen when the US was attacked at Pearl Harbor and seventeen when I enlisted in the Army Air Corps. I was called to active duty two days before the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. After spending a year on occupation duty in Germany, I returned home ready to resume my education. I had credits at Newark College of Engineering, but neither it nor NYU worked for me. As I was returning from NYU, I noticed the station sign for 116th Street–Columbia University. I had never considered Columbia. I knew only that it was prestigious, expensive, and difficult to get into. "What the heck," I thought. "What have I got to lose?"

I got off the train, went to the admissions office, explained my situation, and was given information about the engineering school. I was eligible to be admitted to the School of General Studies immediately in February 1947 and could then apply for admission to the engineering school in February 1948.

In February 1950 I received my bachelor's degree, and in June 1950 I attended the Commencement ceremonies, where, like Senator Lautenberg, I received my diploma from General Eisenhower, with my parents and my fiancée in attendance.

Norman D. Redlich '50SEAS, '52SEAS
Woodland Hills, CA

DEBATING JEALOUS

At the behest of a friend, who knew I was an alumnus, I agreed to represent Benjamin Jealous in the disciplinary proceedings brought against him by Columbia (Letters, Summer 2013). My decision to do so introduced me to someone who was remarkable then and is even more remarkable now. Any suggestion that Jealous received a far less stringent penalty than he deserved ignores not only the circumstances of that time but the reality of today: by any reasonable measure, Jealous's professional accomplishments merit recognition.

Following a one-day protest against what he perceived to be a serious injustice, Jealous faced a process that could have ended his academic career. This was not a simple disciplinary proceeding presided over by school

officials but resembled a full-fledged trial. Columbia retained retired federal judge Harold Tyler, now deceased, to preside over the disciplinary hearing, and employed outside counsel from a prominent New York law firm to prosecute Jealous and other students. Seemingly, any and every charge that could have been brought against them was.

During these proceedings, Jealous did not hesitate to testify truthfully about his actions, although as his lawyer, I would have preferred he not testify at all. He did not seek to avoid responsibility for his actions, or allow his subsequent punishment to stop him from finishing his undergraduate education at Columbia, or deter him from going on to a life of service to others. In that way, his story is not just fascinating: it is a story of redemption worthy of celebration, regardless of whether you agree with his actions then or now.

What would have been lost if Ben Jealous had been expelled or jailed or had given up pursuing his education after his suspension? If he had, Columbia would have missed out on claiming someone who is passionate about life and justice for all, something every Columbia graduate should aspire to be, regardless of how he or she views the world.

Victor A. Bolden '86CC
New Haven, CT

What a shock to read the letters to the editor in response to the article on my admirable fellow alumnus Benjamin Jealous. Are these letters indicative of the type of alums who read *Columbia Magazine*? I am proud to be part of a progressive tradition at Columbia, am no fan of the NRA, respect the history of protest at Columbia in which Jealous participated, and recognize that voter suppression is a far greater threat to our democracy than voter fraud. I also oppose the current stop-and-frisk policy in NYC, which subjects thousands of innocent people to unwarranted invasions of privacy. I doubt the writers would for a minute countenance such a policy in their communities if they were the subjects of the stops.

David Hershey-Webb '83CC
New York, NY

Thank You

6,000 TIMES OVER

Thanks to the 6,000 alumni who took part in Columbia Portraits, we know more than ever about your interests and how you can connect.

Look for survey results in the next issue of *Columbia Magazine*.

COLUMBIA
PORTRAIT
Because there is no one Columbia type.

As an old Columbia graduate and an old National Rifle Association member, I was appalled at the level of ignorance demonstrated in the letters to the editor in your Summer 2013 issue.

The NRA, although founded in 1871, was until 1977 a sportsmen's organization, dedicated to gun safety, marksmanship, hunting, and conservation. In 1977, an element took over the organization, bringing in an expansive political agenda, one part of which was a protection of Second Amendment rights. As a gun owner, I am, of course, thankful for those efforts to protect my rights. However, given the scope and content of the NRA's political agenda, and the relatively small role the Second Amendment plays in that agenda, it is reasonable to argue that the NRA is not now a civil-rights organization. It is certainly clear that it had no claim to be a civil-rights organization prior to 1977, and certainly no claim to seniority over the NAACP.

Numerous scientific studies have been done on the effects of New York's stop-and-frisk policies, and they show no effect on crime prevention. The letter writer's strange bleating about the lives of poor black crime victims is, even on its face, far more prejudicial than probative.

With regard to voter ID and voter fraud: another writer wishes to liken the activity of voting, which is *sui generis* because it is both a right and the foundation of democratic government, to other, more trivial and optional activities for which we require identification. This conceptually bizarre activity is for the purpose of preventing voter fraud, which is imaginary. His letter repeats the urban myths about college students and "certain populations" (we know who he means!). The facts are that over the past several decades numerous studies and investigations have been done, tendentiously searching for evidence of voter fraud. They have come up with nothing.

Thus we have, in one issue, several letters that misinterpret the evidence, another that ignores the evidence, and one that denies the evidence. Not a distinguished

showing for graduates of one of America's finest universities. Since all this dreck is in response to an article on NAACP president Benjamin Jealous, I leave it to readers to determine whether or not this is another example of the Obama Syndrome, wherein the sight of an educated and successful black man somehow reduces a group of white men to babbling nonsense.

David Looman '62CC
San Francisco, CA

In contrast to members of real civil-rights organizations, NRA members have not been beaten, shot at, bombed, and jailed for demanding their constitutional right to equal access to public accommodations, and to register to vote. The claim that the National Rifle Association is a civil-rights organization is grotesque.

Martin Oppenheimer '53GSAS
Princeton, NJ

I am baffled by the letters to the editor published in response to the cover story on Ben Jealous, president of the NAACP.

A year behind Jealous at Columbia College, I remember spackling drywall with him in decrepit brownstones with Harlem Restoration Project, following his leadership on the destruction of the Audubon Ballroom, and listening to him frame claims for ethnic studies during an occupation of Low Library. He was, by turns, inspiring, charismatic, infuriating, and arrogant. I know that I am not the only member of my class who is proud that we went to Columbia with him, and consider him to be the most accomplished of a very accomplished generation.

Like many leaders, he is complicated, sometimes hyperbolic, driven, and not universally admired. However, his meteoric rise to national prominence is something all of us affiliated with Columbia can take pride in.

Only the most bigoted and ignorant of Columbia's alumni could deny that Jealous is a source of pride for the College. The magazine was right to profile him.

Alyshia Gálvez '95CC
New York, NY

Thanks for publishing the letters on the NAACP and the NRA. How frustrating it must be for conservative alumni — not of the New Left, as I was, not Obama supporters, as I am — to read articles like the one on Benjamin Jealous.

But at least they are reading the articles, and, more to the point, you are publishing their responses. Honest dialogue, not regurgitation of fixed positions, is the way we all learn. The letters section is a beginning.

Walter Jonas '67GS
Milton, MA

I was heartbroken over the letters you received about your article on Benjamin Jealous. The first letter, about the NRA — I guess the KKK is also a civil-rights organization. When people think of civil rights, they think about the rights of all types of people.

I wonder if any of the letter writers are doing anything to fight for injustices around the world. It's easy to complain. Do your part.

I also want to add that blacks are not mostly criminals. I'm black, and so are my two sons. I work in corporate America, live in a doorman building in Tribeca, and both my boys attend top private schools. Yet we still seem to have a hard time getting a cab, and my son gets stopped in Whole Foods occasionally, even though most of the people who steal from there are middle-aged white women. I work on the trading floor, and I'm the only black woman there. Instead of stopping and frisking black people, how about stopping them and giving them scholarships and jobs.

Dana Young
New York, NY

I am embarrassed by the letters in the Summer 2013 issue, which I presume are all written by white men, piling on NAACP president Benjamin Jealous. The claim that the NRA is a "civil-rights organization" is downright silly. The implicit racism in some of the other letters, supporting stop-and-frisk as something that young black men (and the rest of us)

LETTERS

should be grateful for, and endorsing the Republicans' efforts to suppress the votes of African-Americans and other minorities, is far worse. I, for one, am glad to have Benjamin Jealous add luster to the institution of which I am an alumnus.

Peter Schneider '77CC, '83LAW
Philadelphia, PA

The Summer 2013 issue of *Columbia* starts off with a bang: six letters complaining about various statements in the Benjamin Jealous article from the Spring issue. What did you offer your readers in the way of countervailing opinion to this litany of right-wing cant? Nothing. Not a word. When did *Columbia Magazine* become a house organ for Rupert Murdoch and Roger Ailes?

Alan P. Rosenberg '64CC
Potomac, MD

It hurts, and makes me sad, that in our popular culture, it is in any way controversial to discuss the requirement to produce ID before voting. The claim of racism is so absurd it is hard to fathom. If one were to say (and no one does) that "all people of color must show their ID" — then yes, the claim would have some credence. But what kind of world are we living in when the simple requirement to show you are in fact a citizen (and the requirement is applied to all) is a problem?

Let's keep serious discussion of real racism as the important subject it is. Why hurt the legitimate issue by claims of racism at the drop of any hat?

Jim Isbell
Anaheim, CA

Those who wrote to question the opposition of Benjamin Jealous and the NAACP to voter-ID requirements show a basic misunderstanding of the "problem" of voter fraud.

The only voter fraud against which the requirement to present identification at the polling place can guard is the attempt to vote under somebody else's name. There are no studies suggesting that "vote stealing" of

this sort is "epidemic," as claimed by one of your correspondents. Further ID requirements will not stop "multiple voting, fraudulent registration, [and] illegal residents voting," as another correspondent thinks. If election officials permit a vote to be cast under the same name twice, or if a name is in the registration records that should not be, then the remedy lies elsewhere.

Some letter writers disapprove of the opposition of Jealous and the NAACP to the way the NYPD carries out its stop-and-frisk policies because of overall crime statistics. Granted that blacks are disproportionately involved in crime, that is no license under our Constitution to target all blacks. It is one thing to stop a black man who fits the description of a black man who committed a robbery or other crimes. It is quite another to stop a randomly chosen black man because as a statistical matter he is more likely than a randomly chosen white man to have committed some crime concerning which the police officer has no particular information. Given the constitutional requirement that stops be based on reasonable suspicion or criminality, a disproportionate number of blacks would be stopped only if a disproportionate number of blacks acted suspiciously while walking down the street in the sight of a police officer. I have seen no claims that this is the case.

As to the writer who proposes that "maybe we need more stop-and-frisk, until guns taken is zero," that approach is an argument for stopping everybody. And since that would not reach the guns that are at the moment stored in a home, perhaps we should search everybody's home as well. Totalitarian governments work like that; ours does not.

Malvina Nathanson '65LAW
New York, NY

FAX CHECK

Xerox may have marketed the first consumer facsimile machine in 1964, as Ed Silberfarb writes in his letter to the editor (Summer 2013), but the technology was in use during World War II. I bought a military fax

machine as war surplus in the 1950s, and Western Union offered a facsimile service in the 1950s. I was covering Washington in those years for a Hawaiian radio station, and members of Congress had those fax machines in their offices to speed up communications with their district offices.

Gordon Eliot White '57JRN
Hardyville, VA

NO BUTS

Perhaps John Simon will explain why, according to Jacques Barzun, the phrase "could not help but" is redundant ("The Unedited Man," Winter 2012–13). In the very next issue of the magazine, Moira Egan's use of it in a poem seems not redundant at all ("On Marriage," Spring 2013): "And when I hear 'a marriage on the rocks' / (I'm sorry but) I cannot help but see / some murky, over-complicated cocktail / whose bitters have obscured all trace of sweet."

The phrase "cannot help but" conveys the poet's sense of trying but failing to refrain from doing something she feels she should not do. And even if the phrase is (at least partly) redundant, why is that a problem? Discourse is replete with redundancy; it helps communication to succeed. The trick is knowing how to use it effectively, as both Egan and Barzun appear to do.

Consider Barzun's own quoted words: "I long ago learned to curb the spontaneous Ciceronian invective I might enjoy discharging from time to time." Having already written "long ago," why does Barzun need the -ed suffix on "learned"? Or, if grammar is disallowed as evidence: "And by the way, who has decreed that violence in a playwright is splendid and violence in a critic unforgivable?" The two instances of the word "violence" help to distinguish, as opposed to blurring, the two types of violence.

Joseph Davis '92GSAS
Bayside, NY

John Simon responds: "The answer is obvious: redundancy is always wrong, and it is either 'cannot help' or 'cannot but.' Hence 'cannot help but' is redundant."



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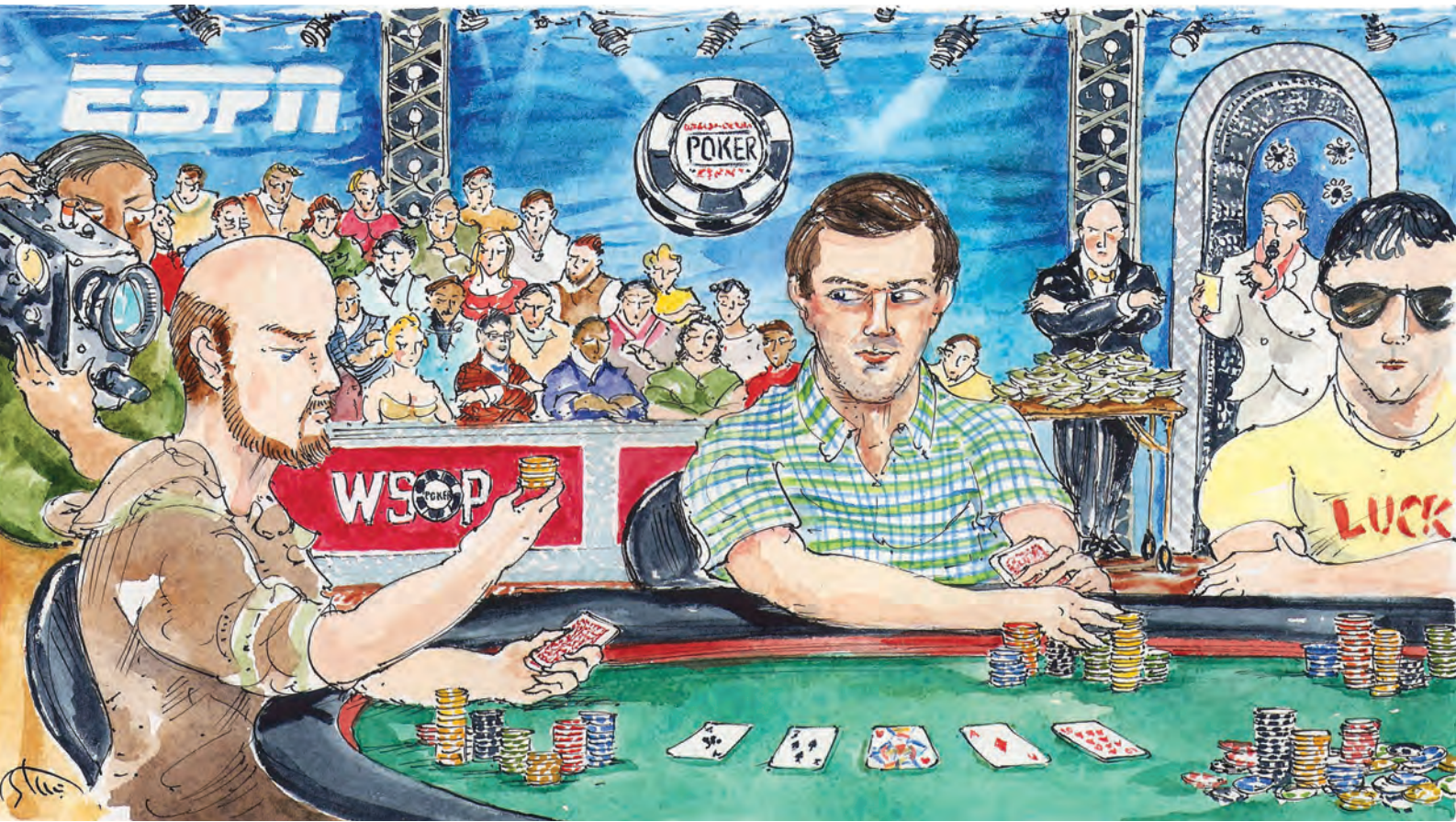
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MARK STEELE

Bettor Living

David Benefield is about to drop. After seven long days of intense mental focus at the Rio All-Suites Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas; after sleepless nights rocked by extreme emotional swings; after sweating it out under the lights and ESPN cameras amid a field of 6,352 other competitors, the twenty-seven-year-old General Studies student is exhausted, ecstatic, and in disbelief.

He is one of nine players left sitting.

In front of him, on the green felt table, lies a stack of candy-colored tournament chips: 6.34 million (not a dollar amount, but more like points). While the pile looks impressive, Benefield faces an uphill climb. His winnings are less than those of the eight other players who have advanced to the final table. The

chip leader holds a gargantuan 38 million. But as the old poker saying goes, “All you need is a chip and a chair.”

Benefield has both, as well as a chance to turn his \$10,000 entry fee into a major score and a huge comeback in poker’s biggest event, the World Series of Poker. Having qualified for ninth place and pocketed just over \$900,000, Benefield will return to the Rio hotel on November 4 as one of the “November Nine,” vying for the gold bracelet (poker’s green jacket, its championship belt) and a prize of \$8.3 million.

“Poker is different from the majority of casino games in that you are playing against other players, not the casino itself,” says Benefield, a native of Fort Worth, Texas. “As long as you make better decisions than

your opponent, you will win money in the long run. I try to consistently make good decisions and limit my own mistakes while thinking about the best ways to exploit the tendencies of my opponents.”

Benefield has won \$633,243 in his live-tournament career, but like many players, his early forays at the table were tough lessons rather than cash cows. After his first game, with his wallet considerably lighter, he went home and ordered some poker books. He consumed as much information as he could, and soon began winning consistently against friends.

In 2008, Benefield broke into the world of tournament poker with several nice finishes, including seventy-third place with \$77,200 in that year’s world champion-

ship main event. This year, he has already improved on that finish.

Just making the final table will be lucrative. Because he can finish no lower than ninth, Benefield will earn at least \$733,224. That could ease some of the pressure, but not all of it.

“Poker is incredibly stressful on an emotional level, which negatively impacts the physical,” says Benefield, who studies political science and Chinese. “In my earlier years playing professionally, I was not good at

dealing with large monetary losses. They hurt me a lot mentally, and I would tend to turn inward. I wouldn’t want to hang out with friends or hit the gym. Instead, I would sit at my computer and figure out how to avoid losses in the future. I have gotten much better about this over the years.”

Before November’s main event, Benefield plans to spend some time in Vancouver working through game situations with his friend, tournament poker superstar Jason Koon, as well as playing online poker and

some other major tournaments in Barcelona and Paris.

But his heart will be in Texas. The Lone Star State has a rich poker history, with legends like Doyle Brunson and Amarillo Slim Preston dominating in the game’s early tournaments.

What would it mean to be the next in that line to bring home the gold?

“It seems only right,” he says, “that a Texan should win the world championship of Texas Hold ’Em.”

— Sean Chaffin

Convocation Conversation

On a bright morning one week before fall classes, a few miles north of the United Nations, a group of students wearing matching lime-green T-shirts processed through College Walk to South Lawn, each gripping the pole of a flag.

As ceremonial music poured from loudspeakers, the students paused along the pathway, stationing the poles so that the banners created a wind-tousled tunnel for the rest of the procession — a cadre of faculty in academic regalia and a sea of nervous eighteen-year-olds.

“Beginnings are almost always very special and memorable moments in life,” said President Lee Bollinger as he welcomed the Columbia College and Columbia Engineering Class of 2017. “But among beginnings, it’s hard to beat the start of college.”

For many of those students, however, it wasn’t just the start of college: it was the start of life in a new country. Seventeen percent of new undergraduates are international students, and fifty-nine of the different flags carried through campus that morning represented their nationalities.

Four days later, in a fifth-floor room in Lerner Hall, things were a little less formal as a group gathered for an optional orientation session with Kirin Liquori Terni, the

director of international student programs and services.

As Liquori Terni got to work setting up a projector that announced the session title (“Life at Columbia. #makeityours”), six upperclassmen in orientation T-shirts (purple this time, to signify their international status) formed a semicircle of chairs at the front of the classroom. Eventually, their audience settled in front of them, pulling out laptops and iPads and munching on the chips and granola bars that had been left near the door as bait.

The international students had already been through nearly a week of orientation. But this session, just a few days before classes started, was, as Liquori Terni explained, the first in what was intended to be a year-long series of coffeehouse-style discussions for the group. Older international students would be on hand now and throughout the year to guide first-years through not only choosing classes and dorm life but the more nuanced parts of their transition.

As the advice began, it tended toward the former — general tips for college living that the first-years had likely heard dozens of times already in their short careers as students. Purple shirts and a few clipped accents aside, it could have been any orientation session.

“Use your resources,” said a lanky junior from Singapore.

“Yes, especially office hours,” added the woman to his right, an English major from an Indian family in Dubai.

“Be flexible about your classes,” said a sophomore from Ethiopia. “I came in thinking I was going to be pre-med, but when I had to rearrange my schedule for Lit Hum and Music Hum, I took classes I might not have otherwise, and now I’m undecided.”

Twenty minutes later, when the panel paused for questions, the advice finally started getting more specific.

One upperclassman noted that international students had to make certain to have their Core classes completed by the first semester of their senior year — not to ensure they weren’t stuck with one last swimming test on Commencement morning, but because it was a requirement for work-visa applications.

Liquori Terni recommended, on a similar note, the campus resources, like the Center for Career Education, that would eventually help students to know where many internationals end up working, and which companies are willing to sponsor them for green-card applications. There would be workshops on American work culture, and

the office could even lend out interview suits when the time was right.

But for now, the panel guessed that most of the students had more immediate concerns.

“When I first got here, I was so scared of not making friends,” one bubbly junior told the group, “but you have to join extra-curriculars. In London, extracurriculars aren’t a thing. You’re just focused on academics all the time. At Columbia I had to

learn how to balance those out. But that’s also where I found my best friends.”

A curly-haired junior from Albania nodded enthusiastically, before piping up in a throaty baritone: “But don’t forget about your hallmates, too. In Albania, you’re so pigeonholed by your interests. There’s an attitude that if you’re a visual-arts person, you only interact with people of your own discipline. Meeting people on your floor,

you get to know people that are studying engineering, philosophy, computer science, whatever. And that’s what Columbia’s all about.”

“You’re far away from home,” added the Ethiopian woman softly, echoing what was probably on the mind of every student in the room. “Your friends will be your family now.”

— *Rebecca Shapiro*

Global Warnings

“It’s an appropriate day to talk about the challenges of climate change,” said Jason Bordoff, the former director for energy and climate change for President Obama’s National Security Council, on a ninety-eight-degree afternoon in July. “If I were still in government and we were trying to stagecraft a speech, we would have done this outside.”

Thankfully, Bordoff was not still in government: now director of Columbia’s Center on Global Energy Policy, he addressed about

thirty people in the Kellogg Center in the International Affairs Building. The occasion was the annual summer lecture series sponsored by Columbia’s Hertog Global Strategy Initiative. This year’s theme: “The History of Climate Change and the Future of Global Governance.” Over the next thirty-eight air-conditioned minutes, Bordoff presented graphs, statistics, and geopolitical data that painted a troubling picture of the shifting global-energy landscape and its effect on Earth’s climate.

First, the good news: thanks to a recent boom in oil and gas extraction in North America, the United States has reduced its dependence on coal and other carbon-heavy fuels. As a result, domestic carbon emissions are down to their lowest levels in twenty years. By 2016, Bordoff said, we will likely export more natural gas than we import, a shift with significant geopolitical repercussions, such as a change in Russia’s leverage in Europe as its traditional monopoly supplier of natural gas.

“This is one of the really transformational moments in our energy history,” Bordoff said.

So why wasn’t he smiling?

“You hear some people say that we’ve solved our climate problem because we have a lot of cheap natural gas and it’s displacing coal,” he said. “I don’t believe that’s correct.”

Gas may pollute less, but it still pollutes. And the fracking process has its own potential pitfalls. “We need to make sure drinking water is protected,” said Bordoff, who believes that the “host of issues” associated with unconventional shale production “can be managed with the right regulation and enforcement.”

But there’s a bigger problem, and it’s coming from the other side of the globe.

Over the past decade, emissions in the US have gone down, but China’s have skyrocketed, and India’s are climbing, too, as those



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countries increase their reliance on coal. “Greenhouse gas is a global pollutant with a global impact,” said Bordoff. “Ultimately, it doesn’t matter where it comes from.”

And while the amount of our energy coming from renewable sources like wind is rising, it still accounts for a tiny percentage of our overall power — and will for a long time. “Fossil fuels, even with serious climate policy, will still power our global economy for decades to come,” Bordoff said.

So what’s the answer? It is not, as one questioner suggested, a matter of making better individual choices.

“If you don’t use plastic bags, you use a reusable bag, and you don’t use paper cups, you use a reusable cup — does it matter?” Bordoff said. “We don’t want to discourage anyone from doing these things” — Bordoff does believe they can have meaningful environmental benefits — “but from a climate-change standpoint, they have a relatively small impact.”

No, to turn the tide on climate change, he said, we need smart, responsible policies with a global reach. “We need a cap on carbon, we need a price on carbon, we need some policy to help drive our emissions reduction.”

Bordoff, proving that you can take the man out of government but not necessarily vice versa, finished his talk with a slide projection showing a donkey and an elephant, both wearing T-shirts. “Drill, Baby, Drill!” read the elephant’s shirt.

The donkey’s shirt was a little more complex. “Increase domestic production, improve fuel efficiency, invest in clean energy alternatives, and reduce oil imports by 1/3, BABY,” it read.

“Which may not be the best slogan,” said Bordoff, “but it may be the right policy.”

— Douglas Quenqua

Mavens of Madness

“On May 20 of this year,” the British actor Paul Hecht tells the crowd inside the downstairs dinner theater at New York’s Cornelia Street Café, “the American Psychiatric Association launched its so-called bible of psychiatry, the newly revised edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. It is the first new edition of the DSM in nineteen years. It is one thousand pages long, and retails for \$199.”

But who wants to schlep a doorstop?

Hecht explains that there is an alternative, and introduces the two men seated with him on the stage: Jay Neugeboren ’59CC and Michael Friedman ’64CC, ’70GSAS, coauthors of the *Diagnostic Manual of Mishegas* (DMOM), a Yiddish-inflected satire of the DSM that they wrote with Lloyd Sederer, the medical director of the New York State Office of Mental Health. (*Mishegas* — pronounced mish-a-goss — is Yiddish for craziness.) Neugeboren, a writer and novelist, and Friedman, the former deputy commissioner of the New York State Office of Mental Health, are here on this midsummer night to treat the audience to — or is it *with*? — a spiel based on their slender volume.

The DMOM has a similar cover to the DSM, but at sixty-two pages is in all ways lighter than the original. The idea for the book came in February, when Neugeboren, Friedman, and Sederer, who are all adjunct professors at Columbia, got together for drinks and began discussing the controversies over the latest version of the DSM (among them: should bereavement be classified under depression?).

“People have gotten themselves into deep tumult about diagnoses,” Neugeboren explains. “It should be called this and it shouldn’t be called that,’ and some of it is absurd.” Neugeboren became familiar with mental-health issues through taking care of his mentally ill brother, the inspiration for his 2003 book *Imagining Robert*.

As the friends schmoozed, Friedman declared that there were “really only two mental disorders — *mishegas* major and *mishegas* minor.” And so they began to contemplate the capacity of Yiddish, a language with an almost onomatopoeic relationship to anguish and deprecation, to bring clarity to the linguistic complexity of psychiatric diagnoses. This led to the idea of a Yiddish diagnostic manual. Neuge-

boren got to work, eager to get the book out in May, around the same time that the revised DSM was to be published.

He churned out a draft in four weeks, and his collaborators then “*potchkied* with it,” Neugeboren says, “*potchkied* being Yiddish for played around with.” The final product is like the love child of the DSM and Leo Rosten’s *The Joys of Yiddish*.

To promote the book, the friends organized the Cornelia Street Café event.

With Hecht and Friedman onstage and Sederer in the audience, Neugeboren opens the scripted performance by reading straight from the DSM: “*Subtypes* (some of which are coded in the fifth digit) and *specifiers* are provided for increased specificity. Subtypes define mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive phenomenological subgroupings within a diagnosis.”

“You had to write a satire?” someone shouts.

There are laughs throughout the night, occasionally mixed with groans and winces at the often-corny Jewish jokes for which Neugeboren, Hecht says, has “an encyclopedic memory.” At one point, Hecht comments, “I can’t believe these jokes are still getting laughs.” An onstage pianist, Ellen

Mandel, punctuates the punch lines with piano flourishes. Then she reads aloud some of the female conditions, such as the symptoms of a *yenta*.

Yenta is a term many New Yorkers are familiar with — the gossip, the meddler — while others are more obscure, like *schmegegge*. “Your brother-in-law usually qualifies as the *schmegegge*,” says Neugeboren. “Or, if he’s the successful one, it’s you who are the *schmegegge*.”

The listeners at Cornelia Street rarely need definitions, though. Their Yiddish is sharp, and when Friedman mispronounces *alter*

kocker (“If we live long enough, we all become forgetful *alter kockers*”), they’re quick to correct him, with some particularly impassioned audience members calling out, “Oy vey!” and “You don’t deserve the name Friedman!”

By night’s end, two dozen copies of the DMOM have sold. The book is also a hit with DSM’s publisher, the American Psychiatric Association, whose psychiatric professionals don’t seem to feel mocked, as the authors had feared they might.

“Because of all the *mishegas* going on in the field and all of these vituperative exchanges and communications by critics,

levity was welcome,” says Sederer. “A lot of people who bought this are the people who wrote the DSM, so it turned out to be a tonic.”

But what about a tonic for *mishegas* itself? The DMOM authors write, “For virtually all *cockamamy* conditions of character, the operative diagnosis is *gornisht helfen*” — beyond help — “though it can’t hurt to try matzoh ball soup, a spa day, a *sitz* bath, a cruise in the Bahamas, or playing hooky from work in the afternoon and going to a movie and not telling anyone.”

— Maya Rock

Speech of Angels

St. Paul’s Chapel is known for its ninety-one-foot dome, its stained-glass windows (Paul preaching in front of the Parthenon), its clay-tile ceiling, its bronze chandelier, its Ernest M. Skinner pipe organ. But when it comes to promoting its fine acoustics on a music-loving campus that includes Miller Theatre, St. Paul’s has to whisper a little louder.

On a summer day around noon, over the full-throttle whirl of two large electric fans, the sounds of a string-and-piano dance suite by Columbia College senior Solomon Hoffman wafted up to the chapel’s vaulted reaches.

Chris Ruenes ’13CC then pursued, sometimes insistently, a spiky guitar theme of his own devising, backed by percussionist Rebecca Gray ’13BC. The premiere of “Mycroft’s Mirror,” by Columbia College senior David Su, then filled the chamber with the haunting, atonal, and ultimately strident sound of violins, percussion, and guitar.

The fifty-odd members of the audience, some waving paper fans, also heard Barnard junior Sophie Lewis, accompanied by Hoffman, sing “Die Nacht,” by Richard Strauss, and “Après un rêve,” by Gabriel Fauré.

Since 1999, the Music at St. Paul’s Chapel series has offered performances by students, alumni, members of the larger University community, and even those with no formal Columbia ties. University chaplain Jewelnel Davis created the series to promote “sacred music in a nonreligious

setting” — “sacred” in the sense of being an expression of the performers’ spirit.

“Any chaplain in the United States knows that spirituality needs to be understood in a big-tent way,” she says in her office in Earl Hall. “One way is through the performing arts, whether it’s music or

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dance.” (Davis plays the piano but recalls, laughing, “When I think of growing up in churches, I was never able to get in the choir because I was tone-deaf. They told me, ‘You can clap your hands, you can sway, but you can’t sing!’”)

The artists who appear once a week during the academic year (and once a month during the summer) are recruited through e-mail blasts and word of mouth. Last spring, Music at St. Paul’s highlighted a viola, harp, and contralto ensemble called the Beowulf Consort; a Korean Christian group playing classical works called C&SC New York; and University organist Timothy Smith. This fall’s menu includes the Harlem Chamber players, the Colum-

bia University Bach Society, and chamber music by Juilliard students.

No matter their genres or styles, the artists love the space. Composer Hoffman, who conducts the Columbia Classical Performers and cowrote the music and lyrics for the 2012 Varsity Show, much prefers St. Paul’s to venues like Lerner Hall. “The other sites are not as pretty and acoustically satisfying,” he says. He was especially glad to have the world premiere of his ambitious, meandering “FADE” at St. Paul’s. “I think the way it echoed in the chapel really helped bring out some of the effects.”

Soprano Lisa Daehlin ’12TC performs all over the city with her pianist, Richard Pearson Thomas. Her first appearance at

the chapel was last fall. “When I came to St. Paul’s, I thought it would be this echoey and reverb-y thing and that my voice would be lost,” she says. “But all my friends said they could hear me just fine. It’s an amazing space. It’s what I imagine a rider feels when riding a thoroughbred.”

Daehlin’s outing this summer, which featured show tunes, came with an unusual acoustical bonus. It was a hot day, so the doors and windows were open. “I was listening to the audio recording the other day, and I could hear the birds singing. I thought, ‘No way.’ They particularly liked the Jerome Kern.”

— Thomas Vinciguerra ’85CC,
’86JRN, ’90GSAS

An Old-Fashioned Song

No more walks in the wood:
The trees have all been cut
Down, and where once they stood
Not even a wagon rut
Appears along the path
Low brush is taking over.

No more walks in the wood;
This is the aftermath
Of afternoons in the clover
Fields where we once made love
Then wandered home together
Where the trees arched above,
Where we made our own weather
When branches were the sky.
Now they are gone for good,
And you, for ill, and I
Am only a passer-by.

We and the trees and the way
Back from the fields of play
Lasted as long as we could.
No more walks in the wood.

— John Hollander

Poet and critic John Hollander ’50CC, ’52GSAS, known as much for his humor as his technical mastery, died on August 17.

Poem originally published in Tesseræ and Other Poems. Reprinted with permission of Alfred A. Knopf.


Moving Pictures

Kimberly Peirce, director of the indie hit *Boys Don't Cry*, focuses her powers on *Carrie*.

By Paul Hond

On the set of *Carrie*, from left: Peirce, Chloë Grace Moretz, and Julianne Moore.





Six weeks before the October 2013 release of *Carrie*, Kim Peirce '96SOA is locked in an editing room in Los Angeles. The air holds the dolorous last notes of blockbuster season and the first tingles of Oscar time, when studios trot out their prize ponies. The chief of the studio has been in and out. Phones ring, reporters wanting to know how the director of a gritty, personal, true-life film like *Boys Don't Cry* came to remake an outlandish horror masterpiece.

Peirce gets it. She, too, loves the 1976 *Carrie*, directed by Hitchcock-goggled visionary Brian De Palma '62CC. Calls it "brilliant." De Palma is a friend, and gave his blessing. Peirce frames her movie not as a remake, but as a fresh retelling of the Stephen King tale, whose elements of an outsider, a knotty family life, a small town, bullying, and reprisal tugged a rope inside her.

Still, when the studio approached her in 2011, she was skeptical.

"I just didn't trust it," she says. "I thought, 'Oh, it's a remake. Hollywood is doing tons of remakes.'" Peirce has nothing against remakes — she loves, for instance, both the 1932 *Scarface*, directed by Howard Hawks, and De Palma's 1983 Miami-splashed white-tuxedo edition. But in general, she felt that the studio system lacked the imagination and inspiration to do the process justice.

"I thought, 'You guys want to do this because there's money in it.'"

That motive at least made sense. Peirce had bigger questions.

The thing was this: she had made two movies, and neither seemed terribly relevant to *Carrie*. *Boys Don't Cry* (1999), for which Hilary Swank won the Oscar for best actress, told the real-life story of Brandon Teena, a twenty-year-old transgendered person from Lincoln, Nebraska, who moves to a nearby town to live as a man. Brandon pursues Lana, a working girl; they fall in love. Brandon also befriends Lana's pals, John and Tom, two roadhouse burnouts who take a shine to this sweet, slight, oddly appealing dude. When the men learn the truth about Brandon's anatomy, they are enraged, humiliated; they beat Brandon, rape him, and, after Brandon files a police report against them, murder him.

Peirce's second film, *Stop-Loss* (2008), was inspired by her brother's military service, and expanded her study of violence and rural machismo. The story begins with an electrifying Tikrit street battle (shot in Morocco) before settling into a stateside fraternal drama about a group of returning soldiers, one of whom, Brandon King, after getting a hero's welcome in his Texas town, is ordered back to Iraq. Believing this "stop-loss" policy unjust, Brandon makes the grim decision to go AWOL.

None of which sounded much like a pulp Gothic about a bullied schoolgirl with paranormal powers.

"Why do you want *me* to do it?" Peirce asked the executives.

Their answer surprised her. "Because of *Boys Don't Cry*."

Peirce was baffled. Then she read King's book.

When I was six I got ahold of an audio recorder and would record my family, mostly my mother, her mother, and her mother's sisters, talking or arguing. They'd say, "Why are you always recording things?" I didn't know why, exactly, but I liked listening back. It helped me begin to understand dramatic structure and dialogue.

Peirce read *Carrie* three times during a trip to Turkey with her fiancée. King's novel was a succulent little truffle. Reading about the lonely teenage misfit with a potent secret made a light bulb go *pop!* above Peirce's head.

Though Carrie White and Brandon Teena could not be more different (Brandon: magnetic, bold, cunning, reckless; Carrie: shy, ungainly, sheltered, afraid), Peirce fell in love with the picked-on girl from Chamberlain, Maine. In *Carrie* she saw, as she'd seen in Brandon, a profound need for love and acceptance. The ache to be normal. To *live*.

Both characters possessed cryptic powers. Brandon could seduce girls with charms unknown to his rowdy male counterparts. Carrie could make objects move with her mind — a faculty that blooms with her late-onset menstruation. "With the period comes the power," Peirce says. "That's straight from King."

In *Boys*, Brandon is unmasked in part by a tampon wrapper that he'd stashed under his bed. In King's book, *Carrie* gets her initial period in the high-school

shower (a scene made famous by De Palma's slow-motion, soft-focus lyricism and *Psycho*-tinged tension), which rouses the other girls to taunt her and pelt her with tampons.

Both Brandon and Carrie are marked by blood and secrets. Both risk everything for a chance at happiness. Both attain a brief exaltation before their peers betray them.

"I do love a tragic structure," says Peirce. "I love that everybody is culpable for the explosion that happens at the end. Everyone is part of the trigger point."

Throughout my childhood, things were so chaotic and traumatic. But when I put stories together, I could find meaning. I could find calm.

If you want to start at the beginning," says Peirce, "you have to start with Carrie's mother, Margaret, being terrified of this thing that comes out of her, feeling that she needs to kill it, then recognizing that it's a baby, then falling in love with that baby and struggling with her terror and love all through their lives together."

Here, Peirce nods to King's book, which chronicles Carrie's howling birth in Margaret's bed: blood-sopped sheets, a butcher knife, a sliced umbilical cord, and a baby at the breast — a scene that did not appear in De Palma's film.

"Each character is pursuing her primal need," says Peirce. "Margaret's is to protect her child; Carrie's is to get love and acceptance and find a way to be normal. How wonderful that they both have such strong, conflicting needs, and that's what fuels the movie from beginning to end."

Sixteen-year-old Chloë Grace Moretz stars in the title role, with Julianne Moore as the religiously incandescent Margaret. In Moretz, Peirce had a Beverly Hills-raised, full-lipped, precociously poised actress endowed with movie-star *je ne sais quoi* ("If you have that quality, the camera just falls in love with you," says Peirce. "You watch her face, watch an emotion play off it — she doesn't have to do anything"), a child star who had worked with Martin Scorsese and Tim Burton, and whose un-Carrie-ish confidence Peirce sought to break down.

"We have to create for you a space where you don't have all the things you've had since you were five," Peirce told the teenager. "Success, money, confidence, love, support. Carrie doesn't have these things. We have to transform you as a character from an overconfident child to a broken young woman."

To that end, Peirce took Moretz to homeless shelters.

"That was sensitive. I didn't want to use people who are less fortunate than us," Peirce says. "So I suggested to Chloë that she owed it to herself, and to others, to see beyond how we live. She was open. She was wonderful. We went to shelters and worked with some girls and women who were very generous and talked to us about their difficult times. I said to Chloë, 'Try to go beyond just listening and *feel*.'"

For three months they focused on getting Moretz to internalize adversity and rebellion. When Moretz finally teamed up on the set with Moore ("who is a master," says Peirce, "she just is"),

the director witnessed the fulfillment of that work. "In the relationship with Julianne, and under Julianne's tutelage, I saw Chloë grow as an actor."

Moore, a four-time Oscar nominee, had her own concerns.

"Julianne was worried that people wouldn't love her character," Peirce says. "And I said, 'What do you mean? Margaret's great. Everyone's going to love Margaret.'"

"We worked through Julianne loving this complicated woman through her love for Carrie. Margaret and Carrie's love for one another is at the center of this movie. Yet there's a tragic inevitability, because Margaret fears that the child is evil, fears that her powers could come out. Margaret is in a moral struggle: she feels she must kill Carrie, but she loves Carrie. So what should she do?"

Peirce, versed in Aristotle's *Poetics* (core undergrad reading at the University of Chicago) and the lessons of her film-school teachers, is a demon for dramatic conflict.

"Carrie is bullied at school, bullied at home. She discovers she has a secret power, which maybe could make her happy, make her

"Margaret is in a moral struggle: she feels she must kill Carrie, but she loves Carrie. So what should she do?"

normal. So she explores it. When her mother finds out, she tells Carrie it's the devil's work. She tries to stop the power. But Carrie is desperate to have something of her own, desperate to be a whole person. She's trying to be everything she's ever wanted to be. 'I can have powers *and* I can go to prom. I can be normal.'

"But we all know that she can't."

Because it's a Kimberly Peirce film, the horror builds from the truth in the acting and the relationships," says Lee Percy, *Carrie*'s editor. Originally trained as an actor at Juilliard, Percy has edited more than forty features, including three with Oscar-winning performances: William Hurt in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, Jeremy Irons in *Reversal of Fortune*, and Hilary Swank in *Boys Don't Cry*.

For Percy, the heart of the film is the mother-daughter bond.

"I think Kim would say it's the love story," he says. "The relationship between Carrie and Margaret in Kim's film is much more emotional, much more linked, much more aware of what holds them together than in the De Palma film, which is a great classic. Brian has his areas of expertise, and Kim has hers."

Peirce was born in 1967 in working-class Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Her mother was fifteen. Her father was seventeen. Peirce remembers her parents as "larger than life" — her mother beautiful, alluring, adventurous, her father a charismatic hell-raiser brought up to "fuck, drink, and fight." It wasn't long before they each blew town.

Her father, a builder, went to Florida. Her mother went to New York. Peirce bounced around among relatives, lost herself in Saturday-morning cartoons. Got ahold of a tape recorder, too.

At five, she moved to New York to live with her mother, who had gotten a job as a waitress at the Plaza Hotel.

That arrangement didn't last long. Peirce went to live with her father in Miami.

Her father started his own contracting business. In the late 1970s Miami began receiving mind-blowing injections of Medellín-cartel drug money. Construction cranes shot up like weeds.

Her mother sojourned in Europe, lived with sheikhs in Morocco. Both parents drifted in the patchouli of me-decade immoderation.

In Florida, Peirce learned to fish, swim, scuba-dive, play tennis. She was a sparky tomboy who read DC Comics and sci-fi-fantasy books like *A Wrinkle in Time*, who loved to draw and make animations with her Super 8 camera.

At times, her father became abusive. He'd been beaten as a kid, toughened up the Harrisburg way, and he repeated that pattern with Peirce.

His life moved fast. Money. Women. What Peirce didn't know was that he was running cocaine in and out of the Bahamas on seaplanes.

When Peirce was ten, her mother returned from overseas and landed in Puerto Rico. Peirce went to live with her for a year.

She would ask her mother questions. *Where did you live? What were you doing? How did you make money? Who were you screwing? Why did you come back to get me? What do you want?* She wanted chronology, wanted to understand the mechanics of how one thing led to the next.

Her mother also brought into Peirce's life a "complicated stepfather." That situation, Peirce says, informed a lot of the physical and sexual abuse in *Boys Don't Cry*.

Someday, when the time is right, she says, she will tell her own story in film. Until then, she will tell it through others.

I quit college after my sophomore year, bought a still camera, and moved to Japan. I had my own darkroom in Kyoto. Over the next two years I went through Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, and Thailand, photographing everything I could. I wanted to be a photojournalist. I wasn't pursuing film, but I was pursuing life, and literature, and images. Being stripped of the ability to speak a language really developed my visual ability. It was the best training in the world.

Before Carrie, before Brandon, there was Pauline. "I was wildly in love with this story," says Peirce, who burns for her characters with the passion of a raptured mother. She doesn't just love them; she is *in* love with them.

Pauline Cushman, an actress born in 1833 in New Orleans, was one-eighth African-American, a fact she concealed as a matter of survival. During the Civil War, Cushman became a Union spy, posing as a white Southern man in order to get her hands on Confederate battle plans.

It was a hell of a story, and Peirce wanted it to be her thesis project. She'd been drawn to Columbia's film school for its emphasis on storytelling. Columbia meant "you're going to write, write, write, and you're going to take acting classes and acting classes and acting classes." Peirce took three years of acting with theater director Lenore DeKoven and actress Carlin Glynn. "I loved it," she says. "I wasn't any good at acting, but I was good at the class, at reading the texts and understanding what the actors were going through and what they needed from me. I was glad the program made me write, work with



Hilary Swank (right) and Chloë Sevigny in *Boys Don't Cry*.

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actors, and use other media in addition to film, because it allowed me to create more work, make more mistakes, and learn more."

Her first year, in 1992, the students shot video. Peirce knew from having recorded her family in different media that format wasn't the crucial thing. And yet. *Video*.

"Look, we all bitched about it," she says. "We were running around the Upper West Side in the horrible New York City heat with these ridiculously huge video cameras. We had all chosen Columbia and were like, 'Aah, this is fucking awful, these cameras suck.' We'd shoot these crazy videos, then go back to these old, bulky editing machines that had something called 'timecode' that none of us could figure out. You'd be up till six in the morning doing linear editing, you'd have your whole project edited, and then you'd suddenly 'break the code' and lose the whole thing, and then it's time for class, and you'd say, 'It was great, and it's gone.' It was crazy.

"But it became so clear to me — and this is said with a great love for film — that it was just about getting story down. I saw that no matter how technically weak the visuals were, whether they were done on Super 8, Hi8, PixelVision, or whatever, if the story was good, it worked."

Peirce took the Pauline Cushman story to her writing teacher, playwright Corinne Jacker.

Jacker thought about it, and said, “I think you have a problem.” “What is it?” said Peirce.

“Cushman dresses as a man to get a job,” Jacker said. “I think you want to write about somebody who dresses as a man because that’s who that person is.”

The insight sank in. Jacker was saying that the story wasn’t going to work as a movie because Cushman’s motivation wasn’t coming from an internal enough place.

That laid Peirce low. She had no story now. No thesis film.

At the time, Peirce lived in “the lesbian ghetto” of Manhattan’s East Village, home to artists, anarchists, squatters, drug dealers, academics, activists — “an oasis of queerness that was wildly more interesting to me than the straight white male world uptown.” For money, she worked nights at a Midtown law firm.

One evening, Peirce was at the law office. During a coffee break, a co-worker, Hoang Duong ’94SOA, came over to her.

“Hey,” Duong said. “You should read this.” He handed her the *Village Voice*.

It was an article by Donna Minkowitz about the case of a young Nebraskan woman named Teena Brandon, who transposed her name, passed as a male, and won the hearts of the prettiest girls in the town. The story of Brandon’s life and death, told from a butch-lesbian perspective, jolted Peirce.

“From the moment I read that article, that was it,” she says. “Brandon was my child.”

“**T**his is a girl with superpowers. She can stamp her foot and create a fissure in the earth. She can lift up a car. She can levitate the furniture.”

Peirce, in postproduction, is talking about Carrie while exercising her own earth-shaking power. With big-budget digital technology at her disposal, Peirce can summon not just the minor mischief

“The question is always: who is Carrie, what does she want, and how would she use her power?”

caused by Carrie’s capricious flexing of her telekinetic muscles (if there’s a girl-appropriate superpower, Peirce has said, it’s telekinesis: emotions turned physical), but the massive destruction of the town caused by the full discharge of her adolescent rage. (De Palma, filming in 1976, had confined the ruined prom queen’s climactic vengeance mainly to the school gymnasium.)

“It was a blast to figure out how to use visual effects to better tell the story,” says Peirce. “As a writer, not only was I able to write on the page, write with the actors, and write on set, but now I could write throughout post, as I refined the action and the story

with the visual effects. The question is always: who is Carrie, what does she want, and how would she use her power?”

For me, sexuality was very fluid — I had boyfriends, I had girlfriends — and gender was very fluid: I was a tomboy. I wasn’t ever really closeted, but once I came out, I left a sort of heteronormative life.

With the Pauline Cushman story on the shelf, Peirce fixated on her new obsession. “I was in love with Brandon,” she says. “It was amazing to me that this female-bodied person lived as a boy, loved other women, and had the audacity to live like that, especially in the Midwest.”

Peirce brought the Brandon Teena idea to Corinne Jacker. Peirce had many wonderful film teachers — director Miloš Forman; screenwriter Paul Schrader, a name well known to a Scorsese nut like Peirce (“Paul taught us that you need ten years’ distance before you can tell your own story, and even then you should aim to transform it, find a cover for it, as he did in *Taxi Driver*”); Serbian director Emir Kusturica; and Ralph Rosenblum, editor of *Annie Hall*, to name a few — but it was Jacker, her thesis adviser, whom she had to persuade.

Peirce had reason to be optimistic. Here was a story about someone who wanted to dress like a man and date girls *because that’s who that person was*.

Again, Jacker balked.

“Now this person has *two* needs,” she said, “and that doesn’t work. You need one need. Does she want to be a man or does she want to be a lesbian?”

“Well, I don’t know,” said Peirce. “She seems to want to be a guy, or to dress like a guy, and she seems to want to be with women; she seems to want both, and I’m not sure which one came first or which one is more important. I don’t think it’s an either-or proposition. I think this person needs both.”

“Kim, you can’t just follow the truth. You have to shape drama.”

“I know, I know,” Peirce said, “but there must be a way dramatically that this character can both want to be with women *and* dress like a boy. Because I do.”

Jacker said, “That’s the truth. That’s still not one dramatic need.”

Peirce understood. She had to find the one need that encompassed Brandon’s behavior. As she sat down to write the script, it came to her that what Brandon really craved was love and acceptance. Dressing as a man and being with women weren’t Brandon’s needs; they were the means to satisfy his need.

I’ve always been an insider and an outsider. I liked being an outsider because being an outsider helped me be inside myself.

Peirce made *Boys* as a twenty-minute film for her graduate thesis project. It was a troubled venture. Her producer left in the middle of it, and his replacement stole Peirce’s money and racked up car-rental bills and parking tickets. Peirce was desperate. Her life savings were gone and she had no producer. She did

Moore
and Moretz
in *Carrie*.



end up with gorgeous dailies, but didn't have the final scene where Brandon dies.

Worse, her dailies — her raw, unedited footage — were still at DuArt, a postproduction facility on West 55th Street. Peirce couldn't afford to get them out.

It was then, in 1994, that she was introduced to Christine Vachon.

Soon to found Killer Films, Vachon was the hottest indie producer in town. She'd made Rose Troche's *Go Fish* and Todd Haynes's *Poison*, with Haynes's *Safe* and Larry Clark's *Kids* set for release. Vachon, too, yearned to tell the Brandon Teena story. Through art-world friends, she had caught wind of Peirce's project.

The producer invited the film student to her East Village office. Peirce was thrilled. It was a huge opportunity. But she had nothing to show. No short film, no feature.

She went to see Vachon anyway, thinking, "I've gotta get my goddamned dailies out of DuArt. Who's gonna pay for that?"

At Killer Films, Peirce and Vachon sat down to talk. Peirce told Vachon about her own passion for the story. She said that though she had made a short, which was all she could afford, she'd realized while shooting it that it was meant to be a feature. Would Vachon like to see the dailies so she could know what she, Peirce, was up to?

Vachon was game. She sprang the dailies from DuArt and looked them over.

"Christine thought they were good," Peirce recalls. "But she agreed with me: why would we pay to finish this as a short if we can make it as a feature?"

Five years later, they did.

Boys Don't Cry went on to win dozens of awards from film-festival juries and critics' societies, and earned Peirce a reputation

so assured and enduring that, a dozen years later, as MGM discussed the resurrection of *Carrie*, the president of the studio's film division, Jon Glickman, remembered Peirce and *Boys Don't Cry*.

"Stephen King was incredibly sophisticated and ahead of his time, projecting what female power was going to do," Peirce says of King's 1974 novel, published a year after tennis player Billie Jean King beat Bobby Riggs in their "Battle of the Sexes" and two years after the advent of *Ms.* magazine. "Both De Palma and King were looking ahead to what happens when women have power. I'm making this movie after women have power, so what does that look like?"

Peirce has argued for the book's feminist aspects — the channeling of the fear of women's power, the centrality of the female characters — but it's clear that her *Carrie* will speak in ways that its predecessors did not and could not.

And so, curious, eager, and a little nervous, we take our seats and silence our phones. What will this *Carrie* be like? How will audiences respond? What will it all mean for Peirce?

The lights go down. We are in the dark, as we have been for months, for years, waiting for the return of the girl with the hidden powers.

"If you start out with a secret," Peirce says, talking about dramatic structure, "then obviously, over the course of the movie, that secret will be exposed. That exposure is generally the crisis point. What I'm finding in my movies is that after the second-act crisis, the third-act turn is, 'How do you deal with the fact that your secret has been exposed?'"

"That's the new life for the character." 🍷



*Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work —*

I am the grass; I cover all.

— Carl Sandburg

There is not enough grass in Rwanda. On April 6, 1994, after decades of clashes between the Hutu government and Tutsi rebels, two surface-to-air missiles struck a plane carrying the Rwandan leader Juvénal Habyarimana. The flaming aircraft crashed into the garden of the presidential palace and disintegrated. Within hours of the attack, thousands of Hutus — incited by the government and goaded by the media — began sweeping through the small African nation, butchering civilians with the half million machetes the government had stockpiled for just such an opportunity. Over the next three months, 800,000 Tutsis died at the hands of the Hutu majority.

Seven years later, James Stewart '13LAW, a twenty-five-year-old New Zealander, visited the ravaged nation for the first time and saw what the grass had yet to cover: open pits containing thousands of dead bodies preserved in lime. As a legal intern in the Office of the Prosecutor for the Inter-

national Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, in Arusha, Tanzania, Stewart had come to investigate the murder, torture, and rape of Tutsis in the city of Butare.

One woman came to meet him after a long day's walk. Over the course of several hours, she spoke about being raped thirty-five times, then being thrown down a well with the body parts of her family.

“When your imagination has been brought very close to the reality of what this looks like and how this felt for people, it's disorienting,” Stewart says. “I didn't understand any more what it meant, how the world was made up, what was really going on. How could we Westerners tolerate this?”

The experience set Stewart on his path. In the dozen years since, he has produced a body of work that is helping to slowly change the calculus of war atrocities. And he's done it by recovering an old, neglected tactic: going after the international corporations that profit from the violence.

A LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In the new glass-and-concrete law-school building at the University of British Columbia, Stewart, thirty-seven, enjoys a moment of peace. His office

How do you stop genocide before it starts?

Legal theorist James Stewart, a former war-crimes prosecutor, has revived a forgotten strategy — and The Hague is listening.

The Pillage Option

By Chris Cannon

is white and spartan and smells of new carpet. The building's eastern views hold Vancouver's skyline and the mountains beyond. Stewart's wide office window opens onto the Pacific.

"Have you ever met any human-rights defenders from third-world countries?" he says. "It's terrifying to imagine the courage it takes to do what they do. I live in a damn nice city. I have a nice lifestyle. But I have seen some really bad things. If addressing these politically sensitive issues is what it takes to make a difference, then so be it."

As a prosecutor and legal adviser for war-crimes tribunals, Stewart has spent years shifting between the killing fields of Central Africa and the courtrooms and relief organizations that are largely powerless to stop the slaughter. While the international justice system has grown incrementally more adept at punishing human-rights abuses in war-torn areas, the prosecutions are largely after the fact: very little is being done to *prevent* war atrocities against civilian populations.

Stewart's research paper "Corporate War Crimes," which he wrote in 2010 while working toward his JSD at Columbia, examined the responsibility of the extractive industries for illegally exploiting natural resources in modern war zones, and offered national and international courts a new tool: a legal framework to hold the natural-resource industry accountable for crimes against humanity.

THE BUSINESS OF WAR

While most war atrocities are committed by rebel groups or military units that operate outside the law, Stewart says, these groups "are almost entirely dependent upon commercial actors to purchase, transport, and market the illegally acquired resources in order to sustain the violence." The cycle of destruction works this way: locals illegally exploit resources such as metals and minerals and sell them to the natural-resources industry, earning money to buy weapons from foreign arms manufacturers, which they use to perpetrate horrendous acts. The self-sustaining loop operates outside the realm of national or international law, leading to large-scale crimes against the local populations.

"Armed groups often vie for control over resource-rich areas," says Stewart, "bringing with them waves of violence as towns fall under the control of competing military groups. Often, the intensity of this violence is directly tied to demand from Western markets, like when a major new game console enters the market before Christmas, or when regulators ban lead in circuit boards, causing a spike in global demand for the only substitute, tin."

Holding corporations accountable, then, creates incentives for warring parties to observe the laws of war — a way to alter the trajectory of conflicts as they happen rather than waiting out the bloodshed and mopping up afterward.

Gold miners dig an open pit at the Chudja mine in northeastern Congo, February 2009.



COURT DREAMS

Stewart was never allowed toy guns as a kid. Raised in Wellington, New Zealand, he devoted himself to tennis, hoping one day to play professionally. Off the courts, he read books about New Zealander soldiers in World War I, and was stunned by the horror of trench warfare. “In these testimonies I read, people said they couldn’t open their mouths without getting a mouthful of flies. Then someone would blow a whistle, you’d go over the top, and most of your friends would be massacred. That was insane.” As Stewart engaged with this material, it produced in him a desire to understand the type of madness that led to these awful events.

Three days after finishing his law degree at Victoria University, Stewart moved to Florida to teach at the Saddlebrook Tennis Academy, where he met players like Pete Sampras, Martina Hingis, and Jennifer Capriati. After a year, he realized that he’d never turn pro, and decided to use his law degree to explore the questions that had haunted him since childhood. He left the clay courts and manicured lawns of Saddlebrook and was soon walking among the mass graves of Rwanda.

There, he recorded first-person accounts of gang rapes and butchered families — stories from a genocide that had unfolded while the American media fixated on the O. J. Simpson case. The motto of the Hutu slaughter was “Leave none to tell the story.” But even if they did, the West didn’t seem to be listening.

As Stewart carried out his research in Rwanda, he looked across the border and saw the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) descending into turmoil.

THE GREAT WAR

The Second Congo War, also known as the Great War of Africa, was the deadliest conflict since World War II. Preceded by a series of massacres and cross-border skirmishes in the 1990s, the war displaced millions of refugees as it spread across eight nations between 1998 and 2003, ultimately killing more than five million people, the vast majority of them civilians.

It took less than a year for arms manufacturers and mining interests to turn the localized Congo War into a transcontinental resource grab for tin, tungsten, tantalum, gold, and diamonds, without regard for the environment or the local populations enslaved or destroyed in the process. Stewart saw the same patterns of plunder, death, and Western indifference that had plagued Rwanda.

“After my time in Rwanda, the DRC became *my* problem,” Stewart says. “I had met Jewish people for whom the Holocaust was a personal problem. Although the Holocaust was always a huge moral shock to me, it wasn’t until I worked with victims of atrocity in Africa that the DRC became for me a day-to-day personal problem.”

According to a scathing 2001 United Nations report, “The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, because of its lucrative nature, has created a ‘win-win’ situation for all belligerents. Adversaries and enemies are at times partners in business . . . pris-

oners of Hutu origin are mine workers of [the Rwandan Patriotic Army], enemies get weapons from the same dealers and use the same intermediaries. Business has superseded security concerns. The only loser in this huge business venture is the Congolese people.”

THE CRIME OF PILLAGE

The term “pillage” may call to mind something as remote and antiquated as the fifth-century rampages of the Huns, but Stewart saw firsthand — in Rwanda, the Congo, and the former Yugoslavia — the results of modern pillage and the war economy it produces. He also saw the legal world’s ineffectiveness at preventing these catastrophes, focusing as it did on “transitional justice” — prosecuting crimes such as rape, torture, and genocide after the damage has been done.

“Armed groups often vie for control over resource-rich areas, bringing with them waves of violence as towns fall under the control of competing military groups.”

Most international criminal courts, Stewart says, target those “who bear the greatest responsibility” — the physical perpetrators — “instead of prosecuting corporate enablers who are more easily apprehended and more easily deterred by the threat of criminal prosecution.”

But what does pillage mean, exactly?

In “Corporate War Crimes,” Stewart explains that plunder and pillage are “legally synonymous” and often interchangeable. Both describe theft during wartime. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia defined plunder as embracing “all forms of unlawful appropriation of property in armed conflict for which individual criminal responsibility attaches under international law, including those acts traditionally described as ‘pillage.’”

In 2004, Stewart, working as a legal adviser for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), was asked to write a pamphlet on the relationship between the laws of war and businesses. When he finished, he offered to write a much broader study on corporate responsibility for pillaging natural resources. But his superiors at the ICRC, aware of the pillage cases from World War II, weren’t sure how or if they might apply to modern resource wars in Africa. “‘Using pillage to hold corporations criminally responsible for buying resources is a very avant-garde idea,’ they told me,” Stewart says. “‘We think it’s too radical. We’re not sure it works. We’re not sure the legal basis is there to make this work.’”

Stewart remembered those words when he came to Columbia in 2007. An academic at heart, he took up an associate-in-law position (a two-year teaching fellowship at Columbia Law School) and pursued his JSD (the legal equivalent of a PhD) in the area of corporate responsibility for international crimes.

“Pillage had been prosecuted as a war crime after World War II, but it had then largely fallen off the map of modern thinking about war crimes,” says Sarah Cleveland, the Louis Henkin Professor of Human and Constitutional Rights at Columbia Law School, who advised Stewart in his writing. “Exploitation of natural resources such as oil, diamonds, gold, and ivory has been critical to supporting many of the world’s most intractable armed conflicts, and James’s work has put new tools on the table to help us confront these challenges.”

In Belgium, for example, an investigation is underway over the pillage of diamonds in Sierra Leone, in which prosecutors are

“Businesses just write off the cost of the loss on these sorts of issues and build it into the cost of the widgets that they’re selling and pass that cost on to consumers.”

using a French translation of “Corporate War Crimes” to prosecute a Belgian businessman allegedly involved in the illegal diamond trade. Stewart is also pressing his case personally: in 2010, at the Peace Palace in The Hague, he addressed three hundred judges, prosecutors, members of civil society, and scholars, all of them seeking that elusive legal basis to hold corporations accountable for pillaging natural resources — no longer such a radical idea. That same year he used “Corporate War Crimes” to train prosecutors from twelve different legal systems at the International Criminal Court, and was invited back to instruct a group of European prosecutors this fall.

BACK ON THE RADAR

The concept of pillage as a war crime is enshrined in the Hague Regulations of 1907 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949. It is at the heart of Stewart’s work, because it allows for criminal liability. Civil penalties, in the rare instances when they are awarded, are a slap on the wrist to extremely profitable corporations. When Shell Oil was accused of collaborating with the Nigerian government in 1993 to execute environmentalists and tribal leaders, the company, which asserted its innocence, eventually settled for \$15.5 million — a parking ticket for a business that generated \$467 billion in revenue in 2012.

“Businesses just write off the cost of the loss on these sorts of issues and build it into the cost of the widgets that they’re selling and pass that cost on to consumers,” Stewart says. “So there’s a concern that civil liability isn’t really something that organizations feel terribly acutely, particularly if the entire industry is undertaking those sorts of practices.”

Meanwhile, over the thirteen years the Shell case dragged on, the company was repeatedly accused of funding armed groups to murder civilian activists, polluting the drinking water with ben-

zene, and grossly underreporting oil spills, which it accomplished, according to a leaked US embassy cable, by planting operatives throughout the Nigerian government.

“Criminal responsibility creates different incentives,” says Stewart. “Criminal law can reach into a corporation, take individual CEOs and employees, and call them to account for their actions. It can also hold corporations themselves criminally responsible. When applied to international crimes, these possibilities change the ball game. You don’t need to prosecute every single incident to have a massive effect on the industry. You prosecute a few cases successfully, and it will send a clear message that will change the way conflicts are financed and the way weapons are transferred into conflict zones.”

Criminal liability also has the power to stigmatize a corporation, as it did with the accounting company Arthur Andersen, which all but folded after it was convicted of obstruction of justice for shredding documents during the 2001 Enron scandal. If public shaming can bring down a single company, says Stewart, imagine the impact it can have on an entire industry. He notes that after animal-rights activists targeted the fur market in the 1980s, fur sales dropped by nearly half. “It shifted the way people think about wearing furs on moral grounds almost instantaneously,” he says.

TARGETING ARMS

Stewart’s current project picks up from his Columbia work on corporate accountability, looking at the possibility of holding arms vendors who sell weapons to combatants responsible as accomplices in the atrocities enabled by their merchandise.

Stewart maintains that meaningful international arms regulation is unlikely. This past April, the United Nations, after nearly a

A Congolese soldier inspects confiscated weapons in 2005.



decade of fighting organizations such as the National Rifle Association, finally adopted the Arms Trade Treaty, a step that Stewart views as positive but inadequate.

“I’ve always felt we shouldn’t be too sanguine about the value of a treaty,” he says. “Generally, treaties are important, but it’s difficult for me to imagine that states would actually agree to have any type of independent scrutiny over their weapons transfers. And even if they did, it’s difficult to imagine that we’re ever going to hold people individually accountable for those types of transfers. You already have a network of courts able to do that work, and they have real teeth in ways that initiatives like the Arms Trade Treaty will probably not.”

Which is why Stewart believes the best way to curb unfettered arms trade is through national courts rather than waiting for global cooperation. Following World War II, national courts held corporate representatives accountable for a range of war crimes, as they did with the German businessman who pillaged one hundred million tons of ore from France, the director of the Dresden Bank who mediated the transfer of Jewish property to German hands, and the business partners who sold the Nazis large quantities of Zyklon B, the poison chemical used in the gas chambers.

In the last case, the United Nations War Crimes Commission described the transaction as “a clear example of the application of the rule that the provisions of the laws and customs of war are addressed not only to combatants and to members of state and other public authorities, but to anybody who is in a position to assist in their violation.”

“Crimes against international law,” the Nuremberg Tribunal ultimately concluded, “are committed by men, not by abstract entities.”

National courts are now rediscovering the precedent set by these cases, using them as an alternative to ineffectual international law. In 2000, the Rwandan director of a tea factory was convicted of crimes against humanity for failing to restrain or punish the genocidal acts of his employees. In the Netherlands in 2007, a Dutch businessman received seventeen years in prison for selling chemicals to Iraq that were turned into mustard gas to be used on the Kurds.

“This is very bitter medicine to swallow,” says Stewart, “and states hate prosecuting their own corporate nationals. But it started happening in part because of the pressure that the International Criminal Court creates, since its jurisdiction is based on the idea that the national system didn’t prosecute these people. What I’m most interested in is states prosecuting their own corporate nationals for these sorts of crimes. There’s a much stronger sense of legitimacy in that process.”

But Stewart is not out to shut down the weapons and extractive industries. He does want them to be more vigilant in making sure their commerce doesn’t support atrocities.

“If what I was saying was something like, ‘You can’t sell weapons to Africans,’ then my project would be ridiculous,” Stewart says. “Africans have a right to weapons, provided they don’t use



JON JONES / CORBIS

Rwandans walk past bodies at a refugee camp in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), 1994.

those weapons to commit international crimes. You have to do some pretty bad things to be guilty of a war crime with weapons. The message really is, you have to comply with the laws of war. You can sell weapons to people who comply with the laws of war.”

THE RISING TIDE

The credibility of Stewart’s approach is reflected in the surge of attention he has received. Over the past few years, he’s won the Cassese Prize for International Criminal Law Studies; Canada’s Aurora Prize, awarded to top emerging scholars; and an Open Society Initiative fellowship.

“Stewart is a consummate scholar unafraid to bring his conscience into his work,” says Peter Rosenblum, a professor at Bard College and a former human-rights-law professor at Columbia, where he was on Stewart’s JSD committee. “He’s the hedgehog of pillage — he knows everything about it. The idea of prosecuting corporations had been there from the beginning, but we stopped looking at those who were prospering. Stewart connected the dots between pillage and the idea of international accountability.”

Stewart acknowledges the powerful forces in his way, and, as Rosenblum confirms, they’re not just big businesses.

“It always takes a special will from a government to pursue these cases,” Rosenblum says, “and we’re not seeing a lot of that.”

But Stewart believes there is no turning back.

“If you look at the ways in which societies have developed and the fights that have been fought — women’s rights, racial equality, sexual orientation — I think this is the next one,” he says. “I don’t think of it as a battle. I think of it as a tide. I think it’s inevitable.”

Chris Cannon '00GS is an American writer and former Marine Corps sergeant living in Vancouver, BC. His writing has appeared in Rolling Stone, Men’s Journal, and Billboard.



THE CARBON EATERS

One Columbia researcher thinks a solution to global warming could lie beneath our feet.

By Douglas Quenqua



Peter Kelemen
with a chunk of
rock covered
in carbonate.



The first time Peter Kelemen visited the mountains of northern Oman, a craggy stretch of rock that pushed up through the earth's surface ninety million years ago, he was disappointed to find cracks filled with carbonate, obscuring much of the landscape.

To him, it might as well have been Wite-Out, redacting millions of years of geological history.

“When I would come to an outcrop full of all these white veins, I would turn and run the other way,” says Kelemen, a geochemist at Columbia's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.

It was 1994, and Kelemen had traveled to the desert Sultanate of Oman to study a coarse-grained, greenish rock called peridotite. The main constituent of the earth's mantle, perido-

tite is normally hidden ten miles or more below ground. But a series of tectonic flukes under the Arabian Peninsula pushed a big chunk of mantle upward, forming the Hajar Mountains and making this one of the few places in the world where peridotite is accessible to scientists. Kelemen hoped that by studying the rock's chemical composition he could reveal secrets about the extraordinarily hot, pressurized, and unstable subterranean world from which it came. The problem was that wherever peridotite had come into contact with carbon dioxide, the two had reacted to form a limestone-like solid. Much of the peridotite exposed to air or water was thus converted into a chalky substance, making it difficult for scientists to find clean samples.

“If our goal had been to study how carbon dioxide interacts with these rocks, this would have been great,” says Kelemen. “But we wanted to understand processes in the mantle. And the carbonate-filled cracks were obliterating the evidence.”

When Kelemen returned to Oman in 2007 for the first time in a few years, however, it was the carbonate he was looking for. Politicians and scientists in the United States had been buzzing about an ambitious plan to slow global warming by sucking carbon dioxide out of the air and storing it underground. One challenge was finding a safe place to lock it away.

Kelemen had a hunch his old nemesis could help. “These rocks suddenly seemed worth sampling,” he says. “Whereas once I bemoaned how they react with carbon dioxide, now I wanted to know: how much of the stuff could they take? And how fast?”

Mantle pieces

Since the Industrial Revolution, the amount of carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere has risen more than 40 percent, sealing in heat and wreaking havoc with our climate. The problem grows worse with every pound of fossil fuel we burn to fly, drive, watch television, or wash our clothes.

But what if there were a way to siphon that excess carbon dioxide right out of the air and stash it somewhere forever? The idea is known as carbon capture and storage, and while it may sound like wishful thinking, it's won some prominent backers. Howard Herzog, a senior

In a spring in Wadi Sudar, Oman, wherever water has run over a rock called peridotite, a crust of carbonate has formed.



OMAN PHOTOS BY KEVIN KRAJICK

The Hajar Mountains on the Arabian Peninsula were created when a piece of the earth's mantle thrust upward from ten miles underground.



research engineer at the MIT Energy Initiative, says that developing a practical storage method is “critical for a secure, clean energy future.” President Obama has supported carbon capture since his first national campaign, and included in his 2009 federal stimulus package \$3.4 billion for developing it.

To pull the carbon out of the air, researchers have devised some creative, if still speculative, solutions. Columbia physicist Klaus Lackner is working on giant synthetic trees that would absorb carbon dioxide like real trees do, but at a much greater rate. Harvard physicist David Keith has built a machine that sucks air through a thirty-foot-long chamber and extracts carbon dioxide using water laced with sodium hydroxide.

But what to do with the gas once it's been captured? Some suggest compressing it into a liquid and injecting it into depleted oil wells, gas reservoirs, and other cavities underground. But critics warn that it could escape and cause damage to soil and water. Others suggest selling it to oil drillers, who use it to float oil out of the ground, or even selling it to carbonated-beverage manufacturers. But all the soda in the world isn't

going to use up the billions of tons of CO₂ that scientists hope to pull from the air.

Kelemen is not a climate scientist, nor did he have much professional interest in global warming until a few years ago. But his experience working in Oman — since 1994 he has returned there regularly — gave him unique insight into the chemistry of carbon dioxide and rock. He knew that those streaks of carbonate that he had avoided occurred when magnesium and calcium in the mantle rock sucked up carbon dioxide from air and water, storing it, he says, “as an inert, harmless mineral.” He thought: what if peridotite could be made to do that on a massive scale? It might make the perfect storage facility.

Geologists had noticed that peridotite soaks up carbon dioxide long before Kelemen visited Oman. But most believed the process was impractical for large-scale sequestration. “I was told that people had thought about it and concluded that it was not practical because it was too slow,” Kelemen says. He was pretty sure they were wrong. “It didn't match my intuition,” he says. “I had seen things that made me think the reactions could happen within hours.”

“This rock from the earth's interior is out of equilibrium with our atmosphere, and hungry for carbon dioxide. We want to take advantage of that.”

— Peter Kelemen

Finding a way to store carbon dioxide in a mineral form has always been the Holy Grail of sequestration research.

Peter Kelemen and his daughter Sarah, a college freshman, map rock formations in Wadi Fins, Oman, where veins of carbonate fill every crack that has been exposed to water.

For example, pools of water that emerged from the rock and came in contact with air would develop a cloudy white film. Disturb that film, and it would grow back almost immediately. “I’d throw a pebble in the pool and knock the little scum of carbonate down, and a day later, a new one would have formed,” says Kelemen, who is the Arthur D. Storke Memorial Professor in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences. “For a geologist, that’s just superfast. That’s supersonic.”

So when he and fellow Columbia geochemist Juerg Matter returned to Oman on a field trip for students in 2007, they collected samples of the carbonate and had them dated using carbon-14 analysis. “I thought a lot of these deposits would be millions of years old, but they weren’t,” Kelemen says. “It turned out they were all less than 50,000 years old.” Their tender age was a strong indication that the carbonate deposits

were still forming. This seemed to happen when the mountains’ topsoil eroded to expose fresh peridotite and when new cracks appeared in the rock, permitting carbonate deposits to form deep inside. Kelemen and Matter estimated that the peridotite was absorbing about 100,000 tons of carbon annually, far more than geologists had previously believed.

Kelemen and Matter soon published a study theorizing that this natural process could be accelerated a millionfold in some places. Their idea was to pierce the Hajar Mountains, a range the size of Massachusetts, with boreholes and then pump huge quantities of CO₂-infused water into the ground. Even considering the economic and engineering challenges involved, Kelemen and Matter concluded that it would be feasible to store several billion tons of CO₂ per year, or roughly 10 percent of all of the CO₂ that humans are now producing. Alternatively, they proposed





drilling boreholes off the coast, which would permit seawater to permeate the mantle rock beneath the ocean floor and deposit its CO₂ there.

Finding a way to store carbon dioxide in a mineral form has always been the Holy Grail of sequestration research, says Greg Dipple, a professor of geology at the University of British Columbia. “It’s been recognized since the early 1990s as the optimal way to store carbon, but it hadn’t been feasible,” he says. “What Peter came up with is a novel way to do it on a large scale.”

Rock-tight storage?

This past January, Kelemen spent a month in Oman collecting more samples.

“We’re now interested in learning how to maximize the amount of CO₂ that a certain volume of rock absorbs,” he says. “What nature can do in this regard is amazing — we’ve found pieces of the rock that literally have carbonate attached to every single one of the magnesium and calcium atoms. It’s permeated. Maxed out. And we want to learn how to make more of the rock like that.”

In recent years, Kelemen has learned more about the mechanism by which peridotite absorbs CO₂. For example, he has discovered that when carbonate forms within the cracks of peridotite it presses out against the surrounding rock, forming new, microscopic fissures. These clefts allow more air and water inside the peridotite, which kick-starts a self-perpetuating cycle of carbonate formation and splintering.

“This rock from the earth’s interior is out of equilibrium with our atmosphere, and hungry for carbon dioxide,” Kelemen says. “We want to take advantage of that. This is chemical potential energy, as a geochemist would say. It’s there to be harnessed on a massive scale, if we can learn how to do it.”

Kelemen is now collaborating on the project with several other Columbia scientists. Among them is Heather Savage, a geophysicist who studies earthquakes. She is now applying everything she knows about how rock formations near tectonic faults naturally slip, crumble, and crack in order to help Kelemen figure out a way to initiate new fissures within peridotite, thereby exposing more of its surface area to CO₂. Alissa Park, a climate scientist and engi-



neer who has done extensive research on novel methods of carbon sequestration, is working with Kelemen to understand the optimal conditions for CO₂ to chemically combine with elements in the peridotite.

“One trick is to circulate the water as deep into the ground as possible, because heat from the earth’s interior is going to make the chemical reactions occur at a faster rate,” says Kelemen.

Kelemen’s next goal is to dig a single borehole and experiment with the injection and removal of large quantities of CO₂-rich water. The operation would cost roughly \$10 million, and so far he has not convinced anybody to put up the money. Part of the challenge in funding his work, Kelemen says, is that private companies don’t yet see commercial potential in storing carbon dioxide, especially when scientists are still searching for an economically viable way to remove it from the air.

He is prepared to be patient. “Maybe in ten or twenty years, after we’ve had catastrophes that are clearly attributable to global warming, there will be more urgency surrounding the development of these technologies,” Kelemen says. “When the time comes, we want to have the basic concepts ready to go.” 🏠

Carbon dioxide reacts with peridotite in this region, turning it into a chalky substance that resembles limestone.

Shades of Green

A Marine in Afghanistan writes home

By Michael Christman



“How could it be that so few Ivy graduates shared in our country’s burden?” I wrote Michael Christman ‘00SEAS in a 2007 op-ed in the *Spectator*. **“Why was it that we had sent so many of America’s youth to war and so few of its elite were there alongside them?”**

In 2005, Christman, working as an engineer in Washington, DC, joined the Marines, wanting to experience what he calls “one of the most important events of my generation.”

“Back in ‘05 there were plenty of people willing to complain or point out the flaws of the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan,” Christman says. “But very few people were willing to put their money where their mouths were.”

Christman, now a captain, returned home in April from a seven-month deployment to Afghanistan, in which he served as an adviser to one of the two Republic of Georgia battalions work-

ing side by side with the Marine Corps in Helmand Province. The opium-producing area is the historical home of the Taliban and one of the most violent regions of the country. Christman had previously deployed to Afghanistan as the pilot of an AH-1W Cobra attack helicopter, and recently served as a forward air controller. As the most senior of the ten Americans on the base of more than 150 Georgians, he found that his role included much more than coordinating airstrikes.

The following edited excerpts are taken from Christman’s e-mails home from his third and final deployment.



November 8, 2012

I had always wondered if I would react appropriately the first time I was shot at. Other than six months at the Basic School seven years ago, I haven't really had any formal infantry training. It turns out your brain has a pretty good idea of what to do all on its own. A millisecond after hearing the first crack as the round broke above my head, I was on the ground. Go figure: the get-the-fuck-down instinct is somehow hardwired into you.

We had headed out for the patrol just before 9 a.m., pushing just under a mile from the forward operating base. As the senior guy at the position, my job mostly keeps me inside the wire and off patrols,

running the command operations center (COC). But being the senior guy also means that if I want to patrol with the boys from time to time, I can. Part of my deal with my Marines is that when I go out on patrol, I'm the pack mule and carry the heaviest radio (and the only radio with the power to talk back to the COC).

The first half of the patrol was uneventful. There were plenty of women and children around. A couple of the braver kids came up to the patrol asking for food and candy. Mothers all over the world, not just in Afghanistan, seem to have a sixth sense about when bad things are going to happen. If a mom senses that something's up, she'll bring her kids inside or take them some-

where safe. When children are present, it's usually a sign that things are good and the Taliban is going to leave us alone for the day.

So you can imagine our surprise when the first rounds came in. Getting shot at for the first time is an emotional event as it is, but for the Taliban to shoot at us with women and children nearby seemed just wrong. Despite my overwhelming desire to return fire, your job as a forward air controller isn't to shoot back; it's to get on the radio and start coordinating with higher and see if you can't get some air on station and, if possible, tell the aircraft where to drop a bomb so that 1) it makes the bad man stop shooting and 2) the bomb doesn't drop on *you*. However, with my face in the

dirt I had lost line-of-sight communication with the COC. I needed to stand, or at least kneel, in order to talk with higher. I got up on one knee and was able to call back. “Wild Eagle 43, this is Wild Eagle 41. We just took a couple of pop shots.” *Crack! Crack!* My face was back in the dirt as two more rounds snapped over my head.

We went back and forth with this. I got up, took a round, and got back down. Since World War II, one of the first rules of combat has been that the enemy will try to kill the guy with the radio. Turns out I had a big-ass bull’s-eye on my back. That,

***Crack! Crack!* My face was back in the dirt as two more rounds snapped over my head.**

and my American uniform. Johnny Taliban isn’t stupid: he was targeting the Marines.

One of the biggest frustrations we have with the Georgians is that they, like many former Soviet militaries, don’t empower their junior and midlevel leaders. Once the

patrol leader decided that we were going to try to egress our end of the patrol, the Georgians should have immediately started bounding back, providing cover for each other. But they just sat there in the open, taking rounds. After spending what seemed like forever getting shot at, I finally got fed up and started directing traffic. The advantage of being a Marine is that these guys will listen to you. Be loud, be forceful, and they’ll move. Give them some leadership and they will execute to a T.

As we bounded back, we took up a defensive position, waiting for the aircraft that I

had requested. I noticed that some of the kids from earlier were crouched behind a berm (they must have been much smarter than us to find actual cover). Fifteen minutes earlier they had been playfully running a wheelbarrow with a bag of fertilizer across the fields. Now they were intently watching us, not scared or frightened but curious, like any eight-year-old boy would be.

We could see their heads poking out from behind the berm, and perhaps taking a cue from us (we were now kneeling rather than lying flat) the boys started to come out one by one, wheelbarrow in tow. I’ll always remember the look that two of the older boys gave us. Their younger compatriots had already scurried off, but here they were with their wheelbarrow and us blocking the way. You could see the wheels turning in their heads. They had to get the wheelbarrow and its contents past us, but we blocked the path. They clearly didn’t want to stay here, but they couldn’t leave their parcel. What to do?

We shoed them through our formation, hoping to get them out of the crossfire before we took any more rounds. As the kids headed off, I couldn’t help but wonder what it must be like to grow up like that. Maybe they’ll see us as something better than the

Taliban, but probably not. We don’t speak the language, don’t understand the culture. We might as well be space aliens.

The rest of the patrol was uneventful. There were a half dozen farmers around for the shooting whom we talked to, but of course none of them knew anything about who or where the Taliban might be. Such is life in the Helmand Valley.

February 24, 2013

The most dangerous times of any deployment are the first and last thirty days. In the first thirty days, you don’t have the experience to keep you from making stupid mistakes. Add to that the swagger that any young person might have when heading off to war for the first time, and you’ve got a potentially dangerous combination. In short, you’re too stupid to realize that your aggressiveness and confidence is what is most likely to get you killed.

During the last thirty days, you have the benefit of five to six months of combat experience, but you are tired and have convinced yourself that you have everything under control. You’ve patrolled the same roads and talked to the same people for half a year, and all you can think or talk about is going home. In short, you’ve become too cocky to realize that letting your guard down is what will get you killed. In both cases, it is our hubris that is our most dangerous enemy.

Timing has it that the last thirty days of our deployment coincide with the start of the spring offensive, on February 22. That morning, an American-only convoy had just left our base, where they had dropped off some mail and people. As usual, we enjoyed the opportunity to speak with visitors, asking how so-and-so was doing at the main base to the north, poking fun at how they lived the privileged life with their fancy showers (Marines wear harsh conditions like a badge of honor), and hearing the latest rumor of who was going home early and who wasn’t. We had had some violent weather over the last couple of days, but the storm had passed, and I



COURTESY OF MICHAEL CHRISTMAN

The author, at the end of his final deployment.

This base, belonging to the Georgian sister battalion, served as a logistics hub. A Russian-built helicopter can be seen in the landing zone.



was enjoying the crisp Afghanistan winter morning and company.

The convoy commander, Staff Sergeant Jones (not his real name), was a talkative man, confident to a degree that bordered on arrogant, but humorous enough to not be annoying or over-the-line. There was always a kernel of truth to his combat stories (he had scars from IED strikes to prove it), but he certainly took some liberties. Still, the Marines looked up to him, and he always had their best interests at heart, so I would patiently listen to his stories and take them for their entertainment value. I liked Staff Sergeant Jones and enjoyed his tales as a way to pass the time.

Less than twenty minutes after the convoy left our position, we received a semi-panicked call from the convoy. They had hit an IED, and there were casualties.

The next half hour was chaos. On the positive side, all the resources of the battalion and the regiment (regiments are made up

of battalions, battalions of companies) were focused on us. Quick-reaction forces from two companies raced to the scene, medevac aircraft were launched, close air support (bomb-dropping aircraft) circled overhead.

On the negative side, this influx added to the chaos. They originally sent a large British medevac helicopter from Leatherneck that could carry all the patients at once. When that took too long, a second order was given to launch two smaller American aircraft from a nearby base. Every aircraft showed up at the same time, and it was on me to coordinate it all while at the same time trying to help the Marine running the show at the attack site to keep calm and focused enough that we could bring in the aircraft safely. At one point, we had six aircraft — two US UH-60 Blackhawk medevac helicopters, one British CH-47, two British Apache attack-helicopter escorts, and an armed aircraft — all trying to pick up the wounded Marines.

The Marine at the scene of the attack was so nervous and upset that he mistakenly threw the smoke to mark the landing zone twice before the aircraft were on station. Lucky for us, a team from another company arrived and was able to take charge of the situation.

With the patients away, the guys on scene were able to concentrate on the recovery effort. The same Marines, now with the blood of five of their brothers staining their uniforms, had to bring back the downed truck, which in Afghanistan is no small task. The entire process took several hours and involved a small gun battle and an unrelated IED find that required some of the security to be redirected.

As the hours went on, we began to receive reports from the medical facility where the patients had been taken. The driver of the vehicle was badly injured, with severe burns to his face and disfiguring wounds to his right arm. Other passengers, two Marines

Shades of Green

and a Georgian interpreter, would survive, but their recovery would be long and difficult. The fifth patient, Staff Sergeant Jones, had died of his wounds upon arrival.

The convoy made its way back up north. A freak storm whipped through the area, forcing the Marines to stop once again at our base. One of the hardest things I've had to do is to stand in front of them and tell them that Staff Sergeant Jones had died. They reacted as you would expect a group of Marines would. There was no immediate crying or outbursts of emotion, but you could read on their faces the torrent of emotion going through them: astonishment, disbelief, anger. Some would come to the realization that they were in fact mortal. One began to feel survivor's guilt after he realized that the person who took his spot on the convoy had been one of the men wounded.

Mental-health experts remind us that the most important thing for these guys to do is

to take care of each other, and that talking is the best form of therapy, and they are right. Venting your anger, telling stories, taking a day or two off are all things that help.

Perhaps the hardest part about leadership is that you are a team of one. Being the solid rock for these boys is difficult. If I break down or go internal, the Marines will break down or go internal. If I blame the Georgians for all the problems, the boys will do the same, destroying the relationship we have worked so hard to forge. For now, my role is to remain the steady ship. To listen when the Marines want to talk, to rein them in if their attitudes become toxic, and to have the wisdom to tell the difference between the two. No amount of training or Ivy League education can prepare you for that.

And yet the fight goes on, whether we like it or not. This has been a trying few days, but the boys are doing as well as can be expected. They're not back to a hundred

percent, but have started joking around again as only brothers can. Keeping them working and focused on the task at hand is the only therapy that I can provide.

I can't help but think of the wife and child Staff Sergeant Jones left behind, or his badly injured driver, a lance corporal not more than twenty years old who hadn't quite grown into his body. I think about what the rest of his life will be like. While his peers are starting their lives, dating girls, getting married, and starting families, he'll be spending the next months, if not years, in painful rehab. And when he does go out on the town, will his scars keep him from getting a date? These are the circumstances that these young men will have to live with for the rest of their lives. It's a sacrifice that they chose to make, volunteering to join the military during a time of war. America, whether or not she realizes it, is built on the backs of men like these. It is an honor to serve with them.

March 24, 2013

Of course, the most widely discussed topic is our impending return home. The first of our Marine replacements arrive in a week, and soon after that I'll be back in Leatherneck waiting on a flight home. At times I can almost taste the beer waiting for me in America. Those on their first deployment are jumping out of their skins with anticipation to get back.

I've done this a couple of times, and from my experience, the reintegration process is best described from the point of view of ordering a coffee at Starbucks.

Phase 1: You stand patiently in line, happy to be around people who have showered at least once in the last twenty-four hours. You order an Orange Mocha Frappuccino from the girl behind the counter, just glad to be talking to someone who doesn't have to shave.

Phase 2: You're standing in line behind a businessman and a soccer mom who are complaining that there isn't enough foam on their Orange Mocha Frappuccinos, and it takes all your willpower not to strangle them and scream about how you just spent



A flyover during the memorial service for Staff Sergeant Jones.

A patrol walks in "Ranger file," each member closely following the person in front of him to minimize the risk of stepping on an IED.



These are young men who have stared death in the face and walked away unscathed. It can be hard to go back home and not become bored with the banality of modern life in America.

seven months in the filth with a bunch of Georgians tiptoeing around IEDs so that they could enjoy their mornings with a five-dollar beverage made from the beans picked by some kid in Guatemala.

Phase 3: You're complaining that there's not enough foam in your Orange Mocha Frappuccino.

Everyone is different, and most people will end up at Phase 3 sooner or later. The experts estimate that somewhere between 10 and 20 percent of us come back with some sort of posttraumatic stress disorder. Some of those end up committing suicide. But it's important to recognize that this statistic also means that between 80 and 90 percent of us come back without PTSD.

It's great that we as a society recognize mental health as an important topic, but I worry that we may have swung too far and that the stigma of the veteran who "loses it" is a burden that we all have to carry.


I'm concerned about the boys as they go back. The first ninety days can set the tone

for their reintegration. These are young men who have stared death in the face and walked away unscathed. It can be hard to go back home and not become bored with the banality of modern life in America. Too many of these young men will try to recapture the thrill of combat by going home and driving fast cars, drinking heavily, self-medicating, or all three at once. Sometimes I wish that before we get home we could lock ourselves in a padded room with a couple of kegs of beer and some boxing gloves so that we could get most of the drinking and fighting out of our systems before we're released back into the general public.

But overall it has been a great deployment, a life-changing event for the better. Nothing focuses a group of young men like preparing for and going into combat, and no other job will ever have as much excitement, meaning, or importance as the last year has had for me. There is a small part of me that would like to stay for another month, just to make sure that everything

goes smoothly with the next unit, but in the end, it's time to go home.

It's funny what you crave after being gone for so long. For the last seven months everything I've eaten has come out of a bag (and all my poop has gone into one, so in a weird way it makes sense). I haven't watched TV, seen a sporting event, had a face-to-face conversation with a girl, sent a text message, used running water, or flushed a toilet. I haven't driven in a car that doesn't require me to put on sixty pounds of body armor and ammunition, had a day off, or showered on a regular basis. I've been living in an open tent with nine other guys and little to no privacy, sleeping on a cot in a sleeping bag. I haven't been without my pistol or handheld radio for months.

My first meal when I get back? A bowl of mussels and fries with a plate of oysters and a tall, cold Belgian beer sounds great right now. Don't ask why that particular meal sounds so appealing. I don't know, either. 

NEWS

David Madigan picked to lead Arts and Sciences



MARTYN GALLINA-JONES

David Madigan

David Madigan, a Columbia statistics professor who chaired his department for the past five years, has been named the University's new executive vice president and dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

In this position, Madigan helps to oversee the operation of five schools: Columbia College, the School of General Studies, the School of the Arts, the School of Continuing Education, and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. More specifically, his office coordinates the management of the twenty-nine Arts and Sciences departments whose faculty serve these schools. Deciding how large these departments should be relative to one another, for instance, and what strengths they should develop as they grow, requires an organizational structure that spans the schools, since all of them are affected. This is where Madigan's office comes in.

"I want to help all of our Arts and Sciences departments hire the best professors

and recruit the best students," he says. "And when these people have amazing ideas, I want to make sure they have the resources they need to do amazing things. I want to provide fertile ground for flowers to grow."

Madigan succeeds Nicholas Dirks, who left Columbia in July to become chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley. Madigan's appointment was announced in September, after he had served in the position on an interim basis for several months.

A native of Athlone, Ireland, Madigan received his bachelor's degree in mathematics and his PhD in statistics from Trinity College, Dublin. After working as an information-technology consultant in Ireland for a few years, he joined the University of Washington as a statistics professor in 1990, remaining there for a decade before moving to Rutgers. At Rutgers, he served as dean of physical and mathematical sciences. He was recruited to Columbia in 2007,

Community Impact launches first capital campaign

For many college students, Saturdays are for sleeping in, brunch with friends, maybe a trip to the library. But from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Columbia College junior Hahn Chang has other plans. As a coordinator for Columbia Youth Adventurers, he spends his weekends taking low-income elementary-aged students from Harlem, Morningside Heights, and Washington Heights on excursions around the city — activities like ice skating in Central Park, or planting seeds in a community garden.

"We try to give them experiences that they wouldn't otherwise have," says Chang, "to show them a world beyond their world."

Columbia Youth Adventurers is just one program under the umbrella of Community Impact, the University's largest service organization. Founded by two students in 1981, it now employs nine hundred volunteers from Columbia and Barnard, and serves more than eight thousand low-income children and adults in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Community Impact is currently funded by a mix of government grants, institutional money, and a small number of private donations,

but it recently launched its first capital campaign, in the hopes of building a \$5 million endowment over the course of five years. The campaign is to be officially announced at the organization's October gala and auction, which also honors trustee Lisa Carnoy '89CC.

With the new endowment, Community Impact plans to bolster its current programs, which it operates in partnership with forty community organizations. Programs are loosely organized into four groups: adult education and job placement, community education, homelessness assistance and advocacy, and youth pro-

ADRIAN SILVER



taking over as the statistics department chair the next year.

While distinguishing himself as an administrator, Madigan has also built a reputation as a versatile and innovative researcher. In the past few years, Madigan and collaborators have developed algorithms that help doctors make predictions about how prescribed drugs are likely to affect certain people, based on how the drugs have affected others with similar health profiles. Today he is working with Columbia historian Matthew Connelly to analyze large numbers of US government documents to understand official secrecy patterns. (See related story about the Brown Institute's "Magic Grants" on page 40.)

"For me, statistics has always been about collaborating with people to tackle real-world problems," he says. "I have little interest in working alone."

Among his objectives as executive vice president, Madigan says, are to increase

the diversity of Arts and Sciences faculty, to support teachers in their use of new classroom technologies, and to encourage the involvement of faculty and students in University-wide research endeavors. These endeavors include those housed at the Institute for Data Sciences and Engineering, where expert number crunchers are culling enormous data sets for the benefit of colleagues in urban planning, journalism, health analytics, financial analytics, and cybersecurity; and the Mortimer B. Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute, where neuroscientists are collaborating with researchers in many other fields to study how brain mechanisms underlie high-level functions such as memory, self-awareness, language, and emotion.

"A lot of the biggest, most interesting research questions today require interdisciplinary teams to solve," says Madigan. "Consider the mystery of how the brain

works. Neuroscientists can't address that by themselves. They need input from physicists, engineers, statisticians, biologists, computer scientists, psychologists, chemists, and many others. This presents exciting new opportunities. And it means that we can't have any barriers to the free-flowing exchange of ideas across academic units."

Madigan is a fellow of the American Statistical Association, the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

"In his important new leadership role, David will be called on to sustain and further strengthen Columbia's academic excellence, expand our interdisciplinary programs, and make this core academic community of Arts and Sciences even more diverse," says President Lee C. Bollinger. "Having seen his effectiveness in recent months working on an interim basis, I am confident he will succeed on each front."

grams. Volunteers work daily within the community to tutor students, teach GED-prep classes, serve a weekly hot lunch, and, in Chang's case, allow the students to explore their own backyard.

"Columbia wouldn't be Columbia without it," says Columbia College senior Jane Brennan, who started working at the Community Lunch program when she was a high-school senior in Westchester County, and now serves as its coordinator. "It has impacted every aspect of my college experience."

Executive director Sonia Reese says that as the endowment grows, the organization will focus more on recruiting and training volunteers and evaluating their performance, as well as reaching out to the community. It will also develop and launch a new website and improve its electronic communications generally. One group that Reese particularly hopes to reach is Community Impact's alumni base.

"We've got more than thirty years of Community Impact volunteers," says Reese. "One wonderful thing about planning the campaign has been bringing them back into the fold."



COLLEEN DENG

Brown Institute awards first “Magic Grants”

A new institute run jointly by Columbia and Stanford has announced its first seed grants for high-tech journalism projects.

The inaugural recipients of the so-called “Magic Grants” from the David and Helen Gurley Brown Institute for Media Innovation include researchers who are leading Web-based projects to track censorship in authoritarian regimes; detect what types of documents the US government classifies; and study how drag queens in Brooklyn use social media to manage their identities.

The grants, which are given in amounts up to \$100,000, were made possible by a \$30 million gift from the late *Cosmopolitan* editor Helen Gurley Brown, who endowed the Brown Institute in 2012 as a partnership between Columbia’s journalism school and Stanford’s engineering school. All of the institute’s activities are aimed at promoting collaboration between journalists and data scientists. This year the institute awarded a total of eight Magic Grants between the two campuses.

NewsHub, a project led by students and recent graduates of Columbia’s journalism and engineering schools, won a Magic Grant to create software that will detect when news websites alter their stories after they are published. The organizers hope to distribute the software to media watchdogs around the world to help them spot when news organizations make edits in response to government censorship, threats from advertisers, or other types of out-

side pressure. The NewsHub team will then publicize on its website the suspicious editorial changes that its users catch, in an effort to shame news organizations into being more principled.

“This problem of quietly changing news stories is not limited to dictatorial regimes,” says Sravan Bhamidipati ’13SEAS, a computer engineer who is creating NewsHub’s software. “We’ve found this occurring now even in the United States, as news websites will sometimes delete controversial statements from their articles without any explanation.”

Another project that got a Magic Grant, the Declassification Engine, is run by Columbia history professor Matthew Connelly in collaboration with members of the statistics and computer-science departments. His team is using data-mining technology to analyze US-government archives for clues about what information is withheld from the public record. For instance, Connelly hopes to gain insight into the political priorities and sensitivities of past US presidents by studying the documents that were kept secret under their watch and subsequently declassified by their successors.

“We want to make out the broad patterns of government secrecy, to see what types of information get classified, for how long, and on what legal basis,” Connelly says.

Mark Hansen, a Columbia journalism professor who was recruited to be the Brown Institute’s East Coast director, says this year’s Magic

For NYC biotech, a real starter-upper

New York City officials have been trying for years to establish this city as a biotechnology hub on par with Boston or San Francisco.

One challenge is that scientists with ideas for new cancer drugs, surgical devices, and other lifesaving inventions have trouble finding commercial laboratory space that is affordable.

“To outfit a lab in Manhattan, you’re looking at plunking down \$100,000 or more,” says Samuel Sia, a Columbia associate professor of biomedical engineering. “A mid-sized startup that already has venture-capital backing can handle that. But smaller players get squeezed out. A lot of them end up leaving New York or dropping their ideas altogether.”

This fall, the city will take a big step in the right direction when Sia opens Harlem Biospace, a business incubator that he says is the first in Manhattan for early-stage biotech companies. Located on the ground floor of the Sweets Building, an old confectionary research facility at 423 West 127th Street, Harlem Biospace will provide up to two dozen startups an office desk, a wet-lab bench shared with one other tenant, and access to cell-culture hoods, bench-top centrifuges, autoclaves, chemical-fume vents, microscopes, and other costly equipment. Monthly rent is \$995, with Wi-Fi and all utilities covered.

“It’s completely set up,” says Sia, who owns and operates the enterprise with his wife, Christine Kovich, who previously worked in finance. “You can show up and start working. If your idea pans



Samuel Sia and
Christine Kovich

MATT LENZ / COLUMBIA ENGINEERING

Grants went to applicants who “led with a story.” The story that Connelly aims to tell is about how the US government has in recent years been classifying more information than ever before and keeping it secret for longer. To document this, Connelly needs the help of technologists who can build special analytic systems.

“It’s that back-and-forth, between technology making stories and stories creating technology, that I’m interested in exploring,” Hansen says. “We looked for stories that didn’t fit comfortably in existing publication frameworks, but instead required new kinds of tools.”

Bushwig, a multimedia documentary project led by Columbia journalism student Adam Golub, is about a group of people who don’t fit comfortably on social-media sites: drag queens. The problem they confront is that sites like Facebook allow a person to have only one profile, whereas drag queens typically have separate drag and male identities. “How should social-media sites be designed to accommodate that?” asks Hansen.

Golub is creating a digital archive for the community of drag queens to upload their media data.

“We expect to create new archiving tools,” says Golub, who is working on the project with Jessa Lingel, a postdoctoral fellow at Microsoft Research New England. “Every performer and active nightlife goer could have their own profile and upload media organized by performer and venue.”



The Declassification Engine, a research project supported by the Brown Institute, looks for revealing patterns in data culled from US-government archives. One of its tools visualizes previously classified State Department cables sent to or from American embassies in the 1970s. Shown here is the Saigon embassy’s cable activity in January and February 1975 – an unusual burst of communication that suggests “the US government might have realized Vietnam’s fall was inevitable much earlier than was officially admitted,” says history professor Matthew Connelly. “Is it possible that people didn’t need to be clambering up to the roof of the embassy later that year?”

out, we envision that you’ll probably graduate to a larger lab space within two or three years. If not, your upfront investment will have been minimal.”

The idea for Harlem Biospace came about last fall, when Sia approached the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) for advice about where he could find a cheap commercial lab to rent. Sia already had a track record as an entrepreneur: in 2004, when he was twenty-eight years old, he founded a company that developed a portable diagnostic tool to detect prostate cancer with just a finger prick. He managed to create that device, which is the size and shape of a credit card, while bouncing between several commercial labs — including one as far away as Switzerland, where especially cheap laboratory space was available. He eventually sold the device to the international health-care company Opko. This time, however, Sia was determined to situate his new company in Manhattan.

“I wanted to be near the investment community,” says Sia, who is now developing a handheld device that can detect a wider variety of health problems. “I also wanted to be close to my academic lab at Columbia.”

When NYCEDC officials told Sia that no affordable facilities existed in the city for fledgling biotech companies, he offered his vision for one: why not create a communal space where people can exchange ideas, swap professional contacts, and barter lab skills? Why not give them shared access to equipment to keep costs down? Why not sweeten the deal by offering one-on-one mentoring and classes on starting your own business?

“The more we discussed it, the clearer it became that this was viable and necessary,” he says.

In June, the NYCEDC announced that it was kicking in \$626,000 to support the launch of Harlem Biospace. Sia and Kovich, who recently signed a ten-year lease on their 2,300-square-foot space, put up a six-figure sum of their own using Sia’s payout from the sale of his previous company.

“We’re in this for the long haul,” says Sia, whose latest biotech startup, Junco Labs, has claimed the first spot at Harlem Biospace. “We believe there is no industry sector more in need of innovation than health and biotech. And we want to create an entire community of talented scientists who are similarly devoted to turning their ideas into technologies that improve people’s lives.”

Miller Theatre opens luminous 25th season

A parade of glowing lanterns in the likeness of deep-sea creatures capped off a weeklong series of free art workshops that Columbia's Miller Theatre hosted in September to celebrate the start of the concert season, its twenty-fifth. Members of the public carried their lanterns from Morningside Park to the theater as other participants played music on handmade instruments under the direction of composer Nathan Davis. "The idea is to bring the community into the campus and the campus into the community," says Miller's executive director, Melissa Smey.

Highlights of Miller's 2013–14 season include an evening of 125 short compositions inspired by John Cage on October 17; a concert of early music by New York Polyphony on December 14; a series of free "Pop-Up Concerts" in which audience members are invited to sit onstage; and the theater's signature Composer Portraits series, featuring the work of Georg Friedrich Haas, Rand Steiger, Anna Thorvaldsdottir, Roger Reynolds, Unsuk Chin, Jean-Baptiste Barrière, and Liza Lim.

>> Visit millertheatre.com.



ANNA CHANA DEMIDOVA

The Miller Theatre celebrated the start of its concert season with the "Morningside Lights" parade September 21.



BETTMAN / CORBIS

Marguerite Higgins reports from the Korean War for the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1950.

A century of stories

Columbia Journalism School, founded in 1913, celebrated its centennial this year by gathering together one hundred extraordinary stories written by alumni. The articles, which can be found on the school's website, start in 1915 with a report from the frontlines of World War I and end with an innovative Kickstarter-funded 2012 project on kidney disease.

Included are stories by Marguerite Higgins '42JRN, whose Korean War dispatches made her the first woman to win the Pulit-

zer Prize for International Reporting; Andrés Oppenheimer '78JRN, who earned a Pulitzer for exposing the Iran-Contra Affair; and Reginald Stuart '71JRN, whose reporting on mandatory sentencing laws for drug crimes brought national attention to the social injustices that can result.

When viewed as a whole, the articles offer a mosaic of memorable moments of the last century, from D-day to Tiananmen Square to September 11.

>> Visit centennial.journalism.columbia.edu.

Film your darlings

Columbia students strolling across campus in the spring of 2012 may have been surprised to see the actor Daniel Radcliffe on College Walk — not in Hogwarts robes, but 1940s tweed. Radcliffe was channeling Beat poet Allen Ginsberg '48CC for the indie film *Kill Your Darlings*, which will open in limited North American release on October 18.

The shoot was a learning experience for a few Columbians: producer Rose Ganguzza '72SIPA hired several film students as extras and production assistants. Others are likely to learn something about the his-

tory of their alma mater from the movie: it tells the story of Lucien Carr (played by Dane DeHaan), a friend and classmate of Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac (Jack Huston), who murdered his longtime admirer David Kammerer (Michael C. Hall) after a night of drinking at the West End. It premiered to critical acclaim at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival, where it was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize.

>> Read more about Lucien Carr in "The Last Beat" (*Columbia Magazine*, Winter 2012-13) at www.magazine.columbia.edu/carr.



BARBARA ALPER

Actor Daniel Radcliffe shoots a scene on campus for the film *Kill Your Darlings*.

Gabelli and Samberg pledge \$40 million for B-school's new home

Mario J. Gabelli '67BUS and Arthur J. Samberg '67BUS, members of Columbia Business School's board of overseers, have pledged \$15 million and \$25 million, respectively, for two new buildings the school is planning for Columbia's new campus in Manhattanville.

The buildings, which are being designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro and FXFOWLE Architects, will be erected between 130th and 131st Streets, west of Broadway, a few years from now.

"My parents did not have a formal education, but in this country, I had the opportunity to progress through a great education," says Gabelli, the chairman of LICIT Corporation. "And in order to provide that type of education, schools need great facilities. Columbia Business School is at a critical point in moving to Manhattanville, and I figured I'd help as much as I could to push it over the goal line."

Samberg, the manager of Hawkes Financial Services, says that he, too, was inspired by the promise of helping the next generation of business leaders.

"I had the good fortune to attend a number of elite schools, but many people don't have the advantages I had," Samberg says. "In supporting Columbia Business School, I'm helping others, who didn't grow up in the same environment, get a chance to advance."

The business school is now more than two-thirds of the way toward its \$500 million fundraising goal for the two buildings, which will be named for Ronald O. Perelman and Henry R. Kravis '69BUS in honor of their previous \$100 million gifts for the project.

Glenn Hubbard, the dean of the business school, expressed his gratitude for the latest donations from Samberg and Gabelli.

"Art and Mario have long been leaders in the school community, providing the



COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

Mario J. Gabelli and Arthur J. Samberg

resources and expertise that make Columbia a top-tier, global institution," he said. "Their commitment and generosity will help enable us to expand into Manhattanville, with facilities befitting our status as a leading business educator."

In brief

Chalfie, El-Sadr earn top rank

Martin Chalfie, a chemistry professor who has developed novel biomarkers used in medical research, and Wafaa El-Sadr, an epidemiologist who has spent decades fighting HIV/AIDS in Africa, were recently named University Professors. The rank of University Professor is Columbia's highest academic honor, with just thirteen members of the faculty now holding the title.

Chalfie won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2008 for showing how a protein that is responsible for the luminescence of some jellyfish can be used in research. Scientists now use the protein, which is known simply as "green fluorescent protein," for observing biological processes in model organisms.

El-Sadr has worked with hundreds of health-care facilities across sub-Saharan Africa to develop best practices for fighting infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS

and tuberculosis. Among her insights: patients are more likely to take their medications when family members are encouraged to keep tabs on their loved one's adherence to a treatment regimen.

Hansen to lead new climate program

James Hansen, a renowned climate scientist and activist who until this past spring directed the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, is creating a new policy-oriented climate program at Columbia's Earth Institute. The mission of the Program on Climate Science, Awareness, and Solutions, he says, is to drive policy and market reforms "needed to preserve a habitable planet."

According to Hansen, who is a long-time adjunct professor at Columbia, the program will support a broad range of climate research while also conveying to civic leaders and the media how its scien-

tific results ought to inform policy decisions, such as those involving fossil-fuel emission targets.

Mailman adopts open-access policy

The Mailman School of Public Health has joined a growing movement among universities and research institutions to make scholarly research available for free. Earlier this year, the school's faculty members decided that their papers should be posted in publicly available online repositories like Columbia's Academic Commons or the National Institutes of Health's PubMed Central.

Mailman is the first school at Columbia and one of the first public-health schools in the US to adopt an open-access resolution; Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory became the first program at Columbia to adopt such a policy in early 2011, followed by Columbia Libraries later that year.

NEWSMAKERS

Design in Bloom

Aki Ishida '98GSAPP won one of this year's twelve *Architectural Lighting* magazine's design awards for Lantern Field, an interactive installation that she created with a team from Virginia Tech, where she is an assistant



TETSUNORI ISHIDA

Aki Ishida '98GSAPP

professor. The piece was displayed during the National Cherry Blossom Festival, in Washington, DC, and used paper lanterns, color-changing LEDs, and sound for a multisensory experience.

Screen Savers

The Netflix series *House of Cards*, created and produced by **Beau Willimon '99CC, '03SOA**, received nine Primetime Emmy Award nominations, including for best drama series. The program, which stars Kevin Spacey and Robin Wright, was Netflix's first original series, and was released as an entire season on February 1, 2013 . . . *Mother of George*, a film co-produced by **Carly Hugo '06CC**, shared the best-cinematography award at this year's Sundance Film Festival. The film tells the story of a Nigerian-American couple in Brooklyn trying to conceive a child. It premiered in New York this fall.

Real-Time Profs

MIT Technology Review included **Christine Fleming**, an assistant professor of electrical

engineering at Columbia, on its annual list of "35 Innovators Under 35" for 2013. Fleming, who works in biotechnology, is currently developing optical-imaging technology for cardiologists that will give them access to high-resolution real-time films of the heart during cardiac procedures . . . Computer-science professor **Henning Schulzrinne** was inducted into the Internet Hall of Fame for his work with Voice over Internet Protocol, which serves as the backbone for communication programs like Skype and Google Hangouts. Schulzrinne has also served since 2011 as the chief technology officer for the US Federal Communications Commission.

Masthead Toppers

Two Columbians are now running major women's magazines. In one of her first moves as Condé Nast's creative director, Anna Wintour named **Eva Chen '05JRN** editor in chief of the shopping and fashion magazine *Lucky*. Chen spent seven years as beauty director of *Teen Vogue* and also had a regular column in *Vogue China*. **Vanessa K. Bush '97JRN** became editor in chief of *Essence*, a leading lifestyle magazine for African-American women. Bush began her journalism career with Time, Inc., and moved to *Essence* in 2000 after it was acquired by Time. She hopes to focus on issues such as



MILLER MOBLEY

Vanessa K. Bush '97JRN

the representation of black women in the media, gun violence, and racial profiling.

Gracie Mansion-Bound?

Bill de Blasio '87SIPA won the Democratic nomination for New York City mayor on September 10, beating out initial front-runners Christine Quinn and Bill Thompson. De Blasio has been the New York City public advocate since 2010. He previously served on the New York City Council, represent-



NEW YORKERS FOR DE BLASIO

Bill de Blasio '87SIPA

ing several neighborhoods in Brooklyn. De Blasio will face Republican Joe Lhota in the general election on November 5.

An Ethical Fellow

Former Columbia president **George Rupp** was appointed a senior fellow at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs. After his tenure at Columbia, from 1993 to 2002, Rupp served as president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee, where he oversaw relief and development operations in more than forty countries, and refugee resettlement and assistance in twenty-two US cities. At the Carnegie Council, Rupp plans to write a book on ethics and globalization. He continues to teach at Columbia as an adjunct professor of religion, public health, and international affairs.

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EXPLORATIONS

Neuroscientists discover a major cause of age-related memory loss

Columbia scientists say they have found the strongest evidence yet that the forgetfulness many people experience in old age is distinct from Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. More remarkably, they say it may be reversible.

"We have treatments for mice that work extremely well, and there's no reason why that wouldn't work in people, if we worked hard enough on it," says Eric Kandel, the Nobel Prize-winning Columbia neuroscientist who led the research team.

The researchers say their discovery, even if it does not lead to a memory pill, could one day help clinicians tell patients if their misplaced keys, forgotten birthdays, and missed appointments are merely senior moments rather than the signs of something worse. They say this could alleviate anxiety for countless middle-aged and elderly people.

"I think this really sets the stage for developing better diagnostics and better interventions to try to ameliorate age-related memory decline, versus Alzheimer's," says Scott Small, a Columbia neurologist who was the joint senior author of the paper, which appeared in the August 28 issue of the journal *Science Translational Medicine*.

Forty years ago, scientists assumed that almost everyone with a spotty memory was in the early stages of dementia. This is now known to be untrue: whereas one in eight people over the age of sixty has memory problems, only half as many have a serious brain condition like Alzheimer's disease, with its sticky plaques and fibrous tangles that gum up communication between neurons, or vascular dementia, with its bursting of blood vessels in the brain. Until now, however, scientists have been unable to say why people who are free of such conspicuous pathologies nevertheless see their mental faculties decline.

A clue came a few years ago, when studies showed that a part of the brain called the dentate gyrus, which was known to be involved in the formation of new memories, was especially vulnerable to aging. This was a different part of the brain than is initially attacked by Alzheimer's.

To determine if a breakdown of the dentate gyrus was behind common memory loss, the Columbia scientists inspected brain samples from deceased people aged thirty-three to eighty-eight whose organs were donated to science. The analysis revealed that as we age, the dentate gyrus is prone to slowing down its produc-



B. G. THOMSON / SCIENCE SOURCE

The Indian flying fox carries fifty-eight viruses, says zoologist Simon Anthony, who is the first to make such an assessment of any animal.

Going viral, one by one by one by one . . .

Consider this flu-season math problem: 5,486 kinds of mammals exist on Earth. How many different viruses do you suppose infect all of those monkeys, dogs, cats, rats, bats, cows, horses, pigs, elephants, shrews, moles, porcupines, beavers, weasels, bears, seals, goats, and other hairy, milk-producing creatures? A few thousand? Millions? Billions?

Here's another question: is it even possible to count them?

"The assumption has always been that there is a nearly inexhaustible pool of viruses out there," says Simon Anthony, a zoologist and molecular virologist at the Mailman School of Public Health. "Scientists have thought it would be prohibitively time-consuming and costly to describe them all."

Anthony, an expert on how viruses spread between animals, is betting it can be done. He says that genetic-sequencing techniques

used to distinguish viruses from one another have advanced to the point where it might soon be feasible for large numbers of scientists to team up and catalog all the viruses inside the bodies of our mammalian compatriots. Doing so could have major public-health benefits, he says, since most new infectious diseases are caused by viruses jumping from other mammals into people.

"If we knew what viruses exist, we might even be able to predict the appearance of new viral infections," he says. "That's something we've never done before — not with HIV/AIDS, West Nile, Ebola, or SARS. They all came as a surprise."

To gauge how much work would be involved in compiling a global inventory of viruses, Anthony recently set out to identify all the viruses inhabiting a single species. He chose the Indian flying fox, a large bat

tion of a protein named RbAp48. When the scientists genetically programmed mice to make less of this protein, the results were dramatic: even young, healthy mice lost their way in mazes and performed worse on object-recognition tests.

The most exceptional part of the research was still to come. It involved a different set of subjects: old mice that had naturally become forgetful. To see if these rodents' flagging minds could be propped up, the scientists employed a technique called viral gene therapy to switch on a gene that controls production of RbAp48. The scientists were astonished to find that when the RbAp48 was restored to a healthy level, the old mice regained their youthful acuity.

"I didn't expect that," says Elias Pavlopoulos, a Columbia neuroscientist and the paper's lead author. "That was a surprising finding."

The Columbia scientists say they are now determined to find a safe way to stabilize RbAp48 levels in people. They are motivated, they say, by the news that low levels of RbAp48 seem not to cause irreparable damage in the brain.

Another fact that bodes well for the prospect of treating memory loss in humans is that RbAp48 uses a chemical pathway that is already well known to scientists. Previous studies have shown



Scott Small and Eric Kandel

that certain experimental drugs enhance this pathway's function and thereby improve cognition in mice.

"Now we have a good target, and with the mouse we've developed, we have a way to screen therapies that might be effective," says Small.

that lives in the jungles of Southeast Asia. Anthony had done extensive research on this bat, and he knew it was prone to infections. Several outbreaks of the deadly Nipah virus in humans had been traced back to the wide-eyed tree hanger.

"Remarkably, no one had ever done a complete viral assessment for any given species," he says. "Most research in virology has focused instead on studying the relatively small number of viruses already known to be dangerous."

Over the course of a few weeks last year, Anthony and several members of his research team trekked through the rainforests of Bangladesh to collect stool, urine, and blood samples from more than one thousand bats. Back in their Columbia lab, they analyzed the samples and found DNA strands of fifty-five viruses, only five of which had ever been

seen before. The scientists then used a statistical technique from the field of ecology to estimate that their analysis had likely undercounted the number of viruses in this species by three, thus bumping up their total to fifty-eight. Finally, they extrapolated this finding to apply to all 5,486 known mammal species, yielding a global estimate of 320,000 mammalian viruses.

"That's not an unmanageable number," says Anthony, whose findings appear in a recent issue of the journal *mBio*.

Anthony and his co-authors, who include Columbia epidemiology professor Ian Lipkin and adjunct senior research scientist Peter Daszak, acknowledge that their global estimate is speculative. They cannot say if the number of infections carried by the Indian flying fox is representative of other mammals, for instance.

Nevertheless, the scientists say they are encouraged by the relative efficiency with which they were able to create a nearly complete viral profile of the Indian flying fox. They say the project cost about \$1.2 million and could be repeated across all mammalian species for \$6.3 billion. That's not bird feed, but considering that the SARS pandemic in the early 2000s is thought to have cost the global economy tens of billions of dollars, they say it could be a good investment.

"We are not saying that this undertaking would necessarily prevent another outbreak like SARS," says Anthony, who is now conducting follow-up studies in several other primate and bat species. "Nonetheless, what we learn from exploring global viral diversity could mitigate outbreaks, by facilitating better surveillance and rapid diagnostic testing."

REVIEWS



PHOTO BY JENNIFER S. ALTMAN / CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

Essayist Phillip Lopate near the George Washington Bridge.

Assaying the Essay // *By Eric McHenry*

Portrait Inside My Head: Essays

By Phillip Lopate (Free Press, 292 pages, \$26)

To Show and To Tell: The Craft of Literary Nonfiction

By Phillip Lopate (Free Press, 225 pages, \$16)

If there's one thing writers love writing about, it's how much they hate writing. The novelist Peter De Vries claimed to enjoy everything about being a writer except the paperwork. "A writer is someone for whom writing is more difficult than it is for other people," Thomas Mann wrote, presumably with some difficulty. "I hate writing. I love having written," Dorothy Parker may or may not have written (one never knows with Parker). And Fran Lebowitz concluded that "not writing is probably the most exhausting profession I've ever encountered."

Maybe it's just the contrarian in him, but Phillip Lopate '64CC appears to be that rarest of creatures — the writer who loves to write. Whatever the challenges of crafting language that rises to life's occasions, he prefers them to almost any other human activity. "I plod through the hours of leisure," he writes, "with a pre-

tense of graceful participation which does not fool for a second those closest to me (my wife and daughter), and I wait impatiently for the next opportunity to sit at my desk and write. Anything. For it is only when writing that I begin to exist. . . . Intensely honest self-exposures come easily to me, the most provocative positions that clash with conventional morality are a breeze . . . next to the difficulty of getting through daily domestic life."

If that strikes you as a less-than-flattering admission for a writer to make, welcome to the world of honest self-exposures in which Phillip Lopate exists.

It won't quite do to call Lopate the dean of American essayists — he himself reserves that title for Edward Hoagland. But Lopate has long been something like the president of the personal essay.

If you've ever taken a course with a title like Creative Nonfiction or Expository Writing, you probably own a copy of his canonical anthology, *The Art of the Personal Essay*. If you've ever taught such a course, you probably refer to the book simply as "Lopate," the way composition instructors say "Strunk and White." And in addition to being the genre's major champion, explicator, and pedagogue, he is one of its most accomplished practitioners. The "Also by Phillip Lopate" list at the front of his books will soon spill onto a second page, which must be a pleasing prospect for a writer who admits to measuring his achievement by the foot: "Sometimes as I roam about on a break from writing I tell myself, like a parent reassuring a child, that I am the author of a whole shelf of books; it was always my dream to take up a shelf in the library, and I'm almost at that point."

Lopate has added two more spines to that shelf this year, reflecting his dual commitment to the practice and promotion of his art: *Portrait Inside My Head* is an entertaining congeries of memoir and meditation; *To Show and To Tell* is a book of well-made essays about the well-made essay.

What makes Lopate's writing, and his writing about writing, distinctive is not so much a matter of style or substance alone as of a provocative tension between the two. Lopate doubts himself, hectors himself, contradicts himself, and lays himself bare, all in a voice as smooth and authoritative as a 747 pilot's. He has achieved a mastery of sentence and paragraph rhythm, of what Robert Frost called "the sound of sense," that allows his progress to seem linear even as he peregrinates; his conclusions to seem inevitable even as he surprises himself; and his most outré pronouncements to seem merely reasonable. In *Portrait Inside My Head*, he begins an essay about his older brother, the well-known

WNYC radio host Leonard Lopate, with a dully predictable encomium: "He has, in my opinion, the best show on radio — the most informative, discerning, entertaining." But the admiring little brother isn't done: "The only aspect of his radio persona that dismays me is when he comes across as dripping with solicitude for some guest . . . and I sense an insincerity in that momentary delay, that vocal catch (ending questions with 'isn't it?') that has become a signature tic in his delivery." And then there's this: "Regardless of the greater adu-

lation my brother receives . . . I continue to feel I hold an edge, based on the idea that my writings have at least a chance of enduring, while his improvised radio chatter disappears into the ether."

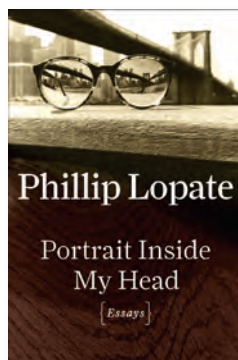
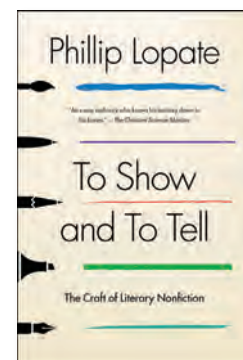
It's the sort of frankness that elicits a complicated response from the reader: first gratitude that it's interesting; then embarrassment

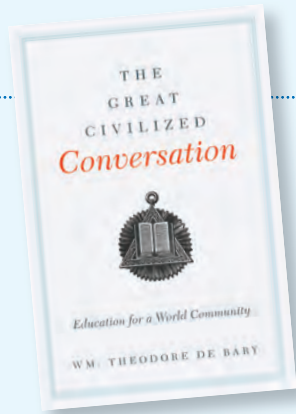
at the knowledge that a writer of Lopate's stature isn't above such petty account keeping; then rueful recognition that few people of any stature are above it; then gratitude again for Lopate's pursuit of candor at all costs. The costs are real, too. In "On the Ethics of Writing About Others," from *To Show and To Tell*, he confesses that his work has permanently damaged at least one close relationship and imperiled many others. His recalls his mother forbidding him to write about her ever again. "I refused, saying that by this time she was a lively character whom I could render easily on the page, and I would make no guarantees. She said she would still come to my book party but would tell everyone I was her nephew, not her son."

Lopate isn't equally compelling on every page. He opens *Portrait Inside My Head* with "In Defense of the Miscellaneous Essay Collection," announcing both the book's magpie sensibility and his self-consciousness about it. Lopate could write a good essay on the contents of his glove compartment if he needed to, and that sort of facility can be a trap. Some of his pieces feel decidedly more commissioned than others. Plunked down hopefully between "Why I Remain a Baseball Fan" and "On Changing One's Mind About a Movie," is a long survey of approaches to the cinematic adaptation of novels that reads like the foreword to a big book on the subject. Still, Lopate can do a lot with a little. As he notes in "Getting the South Wrong," "Ever since Montaigne, lack of knowledge has often served as the starting point for personal essays." He then proceeds to make his ignorance of the American South an asset in a series of subtle, insightful paragraphs about how the region has long held a fascination for Northerners, Jews, writers, and film buffs (he is all four). For such outsiders, the South is exotic in all the right ways: "It was as though anthropologists had found a tribe where the unrepressed continued to thrive, where they still yelled at the dinner table."

Lopate also has a weakness for the odd cliché, which his obvious flair for figurative language makes all the more mystifying: "it shook me to my very core," "barely scraping by," "no cushion to tide them over" (that last one comes with a side of mixed metaphor). I point this out with some reluctance, half suspecting that if I were to comb through his corpus, I would find, and be humbled by, a masterful contrarian defense of clichés. If it doesn't exist, maybe this review will irritate him into producing it — in which case he won't be irritated for long, because he'll be writing.

Eric McHenry is the author of two books of poetry. He teaches creative writing at Washburn University.





The Central Kingdom

The book: *The Great Civilized Conversation: Education for a World Community* (Columbia University Press)

The author: Wm. Theodore de Bary '41CC, '53GSAS, '94HON

Columbia Magazine: Your new collection of essays covers Asian classics as well as your broader views on teaching the humanities, which you've been doing at Columbia since 1948. The great conversation of the title usually refers to works of literature commenting on the works of previous generations, but it has a broader meaning for you.

Wm. Theodore de Bary: My exposure to the term came in my humanities courses at Columbia College, especially with Mark Van Doren and John Erskine. It became increasingly significant to me as I realized that conversation was a key for the Confucians, my main area of study. The title of the work that is attributed to Confucius, *Lunyu*, was translated by Jesuit missionaries in China as *Analects*. That name stuck, but the literal meaning is "collected sayings" or "collected conversations."

CM: The conversation also suggests different cultures talking to one another through their works. Were you aiming for that cultural triangulation from the beginning?

WTB: I arrived at it pretty early, because I could see that in Japan, what I was learning about had been formed in some way by Confucianism and Buddhism. Japanese literate culture from the beginning was strongly influenced by China. It was enabled by their encounter with literate Chinese. They had an earlier, primitive culture, but it was oral and inarticulate for the purpose of civil discourse.

CM: Your interest in Asian culture dates back to your arrival at Columbia.

WTB: It began with my first class as a freshman in 1937, Contemporary Civilization, which was taught by Harry Carman,

who later became dean. He told us that we would be learning only about Western civilization, and he challenged us to start thinking about Asia, as well. Right away I was stimulated to do that, and I took Chinese as a sophomore.

CM: Paul Robeson '23LAW was in that Chinese class. You had been involved in leftist politics in high school. Were you in awe of Robeson's presence?

WTB: No, by that time I wasn't so awed. I had begun to be disabused of my radical ideas, and was especially suspicious of the Communist Party, which the socialists had worked with earlier, especially during the Spanish Civil War. Already we were beginning to learn something about how difficult it was to cooperate with the Communists without their subverting or dominating the process.

CM: You understood that then, before the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact?

WTB: I sensed that before Robeson himself did. He was still very much enchanted by Mao. I had been, earlier, but I was becoming disenchanted by Mao's Stalinist leanings.

CM: In your book, the core program of study you endorse begins with the "sympathetic and critical" repossession of a given society's cultural traditions and then moves on to other major cultures: drawing on what is different, but also what we have in common.

WTB: That's exactly the key. Recognizing commonality in the midst of diversity, and diversity in the midst of commonality. They are an irreducible combination. For all that you and I have in common, we also

have our differences. There is no other way human life can be viewed.

CM: We associate you with defining and defending Columbia's Core Curriculum, and of course with bringing Asian studies into the Core. Reading this book, I began to think of the Core as something three-dimensional, like the core of the earth — the center that holds.

WTB: A lot of people don't realize that. It has everything to do with centrality. If you stop to think about the name for China, *Zhonghua*, it is usually translated as "middle kingdom." That is somewhat misleading. It was in the middle, but the main idea is "central": the central kingdom everybody looks to for civilization, and for the core of civilization. That is a key to the whole thing.

You know, "general education" was then the going term, not "Core." When I chaired the committee that reviewed the program at Columbia in 1987–88, one of the first things we discussed was the inappropriateness of "general education." Because generality could lead anywhere. And did.

CM: It leads outward.

WTB: That's what happened at Harvard because generality could mean anything. It became a kind of distribution requirement with no core.

CM: Do you ever feel unsure of where you belong between East and West?

WTB: No, I'm an American. While I felt that it was essential for me to try to understand other cultures and civilizations, no other civilization could have the same meaning for me as my being an American and a Columbian. — *Michael B. Shavelson*

Autumn of the President // By William R. Keylor

JFK's Last Hundred Days: The Transformation of a Man and the Emergence of a Great President

By Thurston Clarke (Penguin, 432 pages, \$29.95)

More than sixty new books have been published in the past year in anticipation of the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Is there anything new to say? Author and historian Thurston Clarke demonstrates there is with *JFK's Last Hundred Days: The Transformation of a Man and the Emergence of a Great President*, a meticulously researched, endlessly entertaining, almost day-by-day narrative of the three months leading up to November 22, 1963.

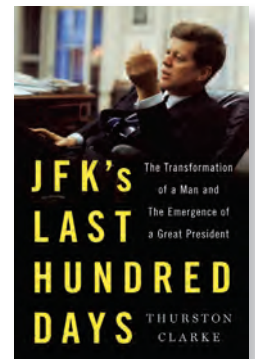
Clarke's book hardly belongs to the genre of unabashed hagiography published long ago by former Kennedy insiders such as Arthur Schlesinger and Ted Sorensen. Nor does Clarke gloss over the seamy side of Camelot exposed by Seymour Hersh and others. On the contrary, JFK's womanizing is recounted in detail, down to his position after removing his back brace for a very brief roll in the hay with Marlene Dietrich. So, too, is the sordid story of his cruelty toward his wife after she gave birth to a stillborn baby girl in 1956 while the senator was on a cruise off Capri with several young women. Leaving brother Bobby to comfort Jackie and bury the child, he refused to cut short his vacation until his friend Senator George Smathers persuaded him to "haul your ass back to your wife if you want to run for president." But in Clarke's telling, this type of risky and thoughtless behavior came to an end with the death of his infant son Patrick in August 1963, a tragic event that transformed the womanizer into a loving husband who doted on Jackie and curtailed his compulsive philandering.

This remarkable transformation in Kennedy's personal life was mirrored, according to Clarke, in an analogous shift in his domestic and foreign policies in the final months of his life. The hard-line cold warrior who had denounced the Eisenhower administration during the 1960 campaign for the (nonexistent) missile gap and then stared down Khrushchev during the Cuban Missile Crisis was converted into an ardent proponent of détente with Moscow. The man who authorized the Bay of Pigs invasion and then the top-secret project (code-named "Operation Mongoose" and supervised by his brother Bobby) to assassinate Fidel Castro encouraged secret contacts with the Cuban leader through intermediaries in the hopes of reestablishing normal relations with Havana. Underpinning this quest for renewed dialogue with the communist world was the fear of a nuclear Armageddon after the Cuban Missile Crisis. In his "peace speech" at American University on June 10, 1963, he unveiled his new preoccupation with achieving the first major breakthrough in nuclear-arms control, which culminated in the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which he signed four months later. Another example of this foreign-policy turnaround was Ken-

nedy's decision to remove a thousand American military advisers from Vietnam by the end of 1963 and his plan to bring home most of the remaining personnel in 1964, or at least after his reelection. Clarke is absolutely convinced that, had Kennedy survived, America would have been out of Vietnam by the end of his presidency, and the Cold War a thing of the past.

In the realm of domestic policy, the conventional history portrays Kennedy as personally committed to civil rights, immigration reform, medical care for the elderly, antipoverty legislation, and other liberal initiatives, but unable or unwilling to mount an energetic campaign to convert these progressive goals into law. Lyndon Johnson is usually credited with employing his renowned skills of persuasion and his close relations with congressional leaders of both parties to pass such landmark pieces of legislation as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act, the Immigration and Nationality Act, Medicare, and the multitude of laws making up the War on Poverty. Clarke demonstrates that Kennedy himself, using his own formidable horse-trading talents to wrest concessions from partisan Republican conservatives such as Senate minority leader Everett Dirksen and House minority leader Charles Halleck, had already set in motion the legislative machinery to produce all these transformative laws after his reelection. Vice President Johnson appears throughout the book as a bitter man totally marginalized by the architects of the New Frontier. On several occasions, Kennedy, his wife, and several top aides express horror at the thought of a Johnson presidency.

Some assassination conspiracy theorists will find grist for their mill in this book. The Oliver Stone crowd will be heartened by the portrait of Kennedy's plans to seek détente with Khrushchev and Castro, withdrawal from Vietnam, and an end to the nuclear-arms race in the face of stiff opposition from the military brass. The 1962 novel *Seven Days in May*, later made into a movie, described an attempted military coup in reaction to a president's decision to sign a nuclear-arms agreement with the Soviet Union. After reading it in galley proof, JFK confessed that he had pondered the possibility of such a move by the military and named a couple of generals whom he thought "might hanker to duplicate fiction." Proponents of the theory that Castro ordered JFK's assassination in retaliation against the Kennedy brothers' project to kill the



REVIEWS

Cuban leader will be dismayed by the book's claim that both Kennedy and Castro were giving serious consideration to burying the hatchet. But Clarke's effort to play down the Castro assassination plan and play up JFK's turn toward moderation ignores the evidence that Operation Mongoose continued right up to the tragedy in Dallas, as Tim Weiner '78CC, '79JRN has shown in his *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*. On October 29, 1963, the CIA's top Cuba specialist met in Paris with a prospective hit man inside

Castro's government and promised to deliver a high-powered rifle with a telescopic sight to take out the Cuban leader. Toward the end of his presidency, Johnson opined that "Kennedy was trying to get to Castro, but Castro got to him first."

William R. Keylor '71GSAS, '71SIPA is a professor of history and international relations and the director of the International History Institute at Boston University.

Politickles // By Joshua J. Friedman

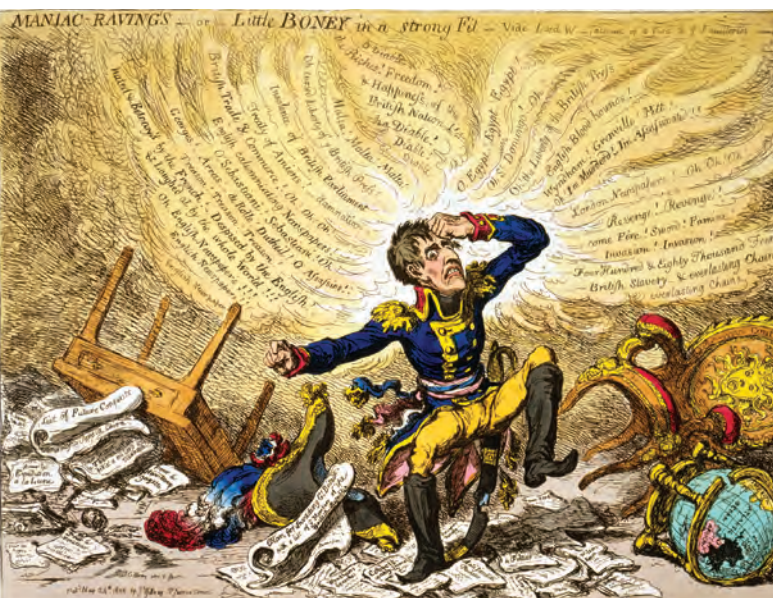
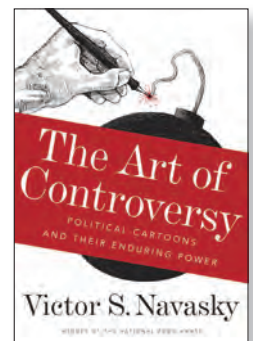
The Art of Controversy: Political Cartoons and Their Enduring Power
By Victor S. Navasky (Knopf, 256 pages, \$27.95)

"A pamphlet is no more than a violation of opinion; a caricature amounts to an act of violence," declared King Louis-Philippe of France in 1835. Were the royal feelings merely bruised by Charles Philipon's popular drawing of his pointy-wigged, fat-jowled head morphing into a plump pear? Or did he genuinely fear for the stability of his regime? Louis-Philippe was not the only monarch who felt this strongly about the wounding power of cartoons: Napoleon Bonaparte found James Gillray's caricatures of him as the vain, paranoid "Little Boney" so damaging to his international reputation that he reportedly claimed that they "did more than all the armies of Europe to bring me down."

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me, goes the nursery rhyme; why do political cartoons bring the mighty to their knees? That's the question that Columbia Journalism School professor Victor Navasky grapples with in *The Art of Controversy: Political Cartoons and Their Enduring Power*. Drawing on his experience as the editor of the *Nation* and the satirical magazine *Monocle*, Navasky traces the form across centuries and nations — Hogarth to Hirschfeld, Denmark to South Africa — and collects theories.

Perhaps drawings have the power to act instantly upon the imagination, like a book read at the speed of light. Or perhaps it is the particular genius of caricaturists to seek "the perfect deformity . . . to penetrate through the outward appearance to the inner being in all its ugliness," as the art historians E. H. Gombrich and Ernst Kris wrote in the *British Journal of Medical Psychology* in 1938. Think, for instance, of the indelible Nixon caricatures of *Washington Post* cartoonist Herblock: hunched, jowly, with permanent five o'clock shadow. Of course, some subjects are riper for caricature than others, as political cartoonist Doug Marlette observed: "Nixon looked like his policies. His nose told you he was going to invade Cambodia."

In the end, perhaps the greatest reason the caricature wounds so deeply is that the subject has no adequate way to respond. "The only way really to answer a cartoon is with another cartoon," writes Navasky, "and there is, for all practical purposes, no such thing as a cartoon to the editor."



James Gillray, *Maniac Ravings, or Little Boney in a Strong Fit*, 1803

Mirror, Mirror // By Gaiutra Bahadur

At Night We Walk in Circles

By Daniel Alarcón (Riverhead Books, 384 pages, \$27.95)

At Night We Walk in Circles, the title of the new novel by Daniel Alarcón '99CC, is a willful mistranslation of the medieval Latin palindrome *In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni*. The correct translation is “We enter the circle at night and are consumed by fire.” The palindrome invites us to solve a riddle: what enters a circle at night and is consumed by fire? The answer is a moth, which, contrary to Alarcón’s title, does not walk, but flies. It’s a riddle as a title, too: nowhere in the novel itself does the palindrome appear.

An epigraph contains a clue, however. It’s from *The Society of the Spectacle*, by the avant-garde French writer and filmmaker Guy Debord, whose autobiographical final film, made in 1978, was titled *In Girum Imus Nocte et Consumimur Igni*. Debord, a key figure in the 1968 Paris uprising against the French government, was grounded in the Marxist, anarchist, surrealist movement he founded, the Situationist International. “At Night We Walk in Circles and Are Consumed by Fire” is also the title of a 2013 experimental nine-part song cycle inspired by dreams. The composer, Carla Kihlstedt, has said that trying to explain dreams during waking hours is like plugging a phrase into translation software. It yields confusing, even absurd results.

Readers won’t need these footnotes to appreciate Alarcón’s brooding, effortlessly readable second novel, set in an unnamed Andean country intent on forgetting the guerrilla war from which it has emerged, a place where “there were no statues to the dead, no streets renamed in their honor, no museum of historical memory.” The young actor Nelson scores a role in an infamous play, *The Idiot President*, which once landed its playwright in prison on trumped-up terrorism charges. As a child, Nelson had been transfixed by a jailhouse production of the play, broadcast on the radio. He idolized the playwright, Henry, who reluctantly resuscitates the play fifteen years after his arrest, reviving unnerving memories.

Taking the play on tour, into tiny, high-altitude towns in former guerrilla territory, leads Henry to the backwater where his late lover from prison used to live. There, Henry unwittingly reveals the lover’s death to the man’s dementia-ridden mother, who believed her son to have migrated, not died, fifteen years earlier. Nelson, who had already been instructed to cut off all ties to his own life to enter the world of the play, is now forced to act the part of the senile woman’s own absent son to cover up his mentor’s mistake.

Early in *At Night We Walk in Circles*, long before Nelson inhabits the roles of killer and dead man, an anonymous narrator intrudes into the story. He sounds omniscient because he has read Nelson’s journals from the troupe’s journey into the hills and has interviewed everyone who encountered Nelson — not just the ex-girlfriend he still loves, not just his widowed mother, not just

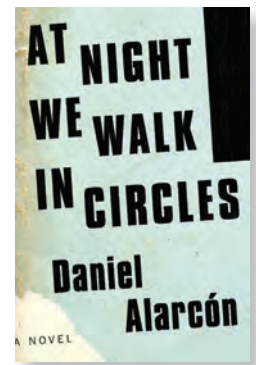
the brother in America who abandoned him. As this journalist narrator reconstructs the story, from everyone’s perspective except Nelson’s, the tension builds. Clearly, something has happened to the actor. Exactly what is withheld until the very end, when the novel’s surrealism, if little else, becomes clear.

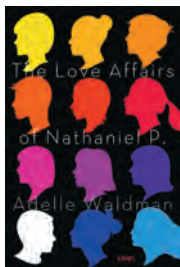
The novel’s indeterminate ending dazes us a bit, as if we’ve emerged from a midday screening of a movie onto streets too bright and too straight for the noir surrealism we encountered inside. But Alarcón’s Situationist allusions help us to understand that we *should* be puzzled and dissatisfied when we emerge. Alarcón *means* to play with our expectations of a neatly resolved narrative. And we’re supposed to be thinking about art’s disruptive intersection with politics, about how performance merges disturbingly with real life — both Situationist ideas, central to its critique of a society of spectators.

The Peruvian-born Alarcón’s first novel, *Lost City Radio*, focuses on a radio show that reunites the disappeared with their families in a country recovering from civil war. In *At Night We Walk in Circles*, regimes don’t steal people, but other things do: mundane death, rival lovers, America. The village where Henry’s late lover spent his childhood is eerily empty of men, except for adolescents and the elderly. It’s a world that García Márquez might have dreamed up, but in fact it’s real. Immigration has drained many villages of men across Latin America. It is easy for an infirm old woman to believe her son undocumented in Los Angeles rather than dead, and Alarcón evokes this simply, movingly, hauntingly.

Mostly, however, the novel’s pleasures are intellectual. Engaging readers as puzzle solvers, Alarcón, for instance, embeds mirrors throughout the text. Henry uses one during rehearsals to help Nelson inhabit his role. The don of Henry’s cell block is Espejo (Spanish for mirror). Nelson’s girl realizes she loves him in the moment when she mirrors his every gesture involuntarily. Nelson’s life reflects that of the missing son he impersonates. In a glass darkly, what happens to Nelson looks a little like what happened to Henry. And what, after all, is a palindrome if not a sequence of letters mirrored back at itself?

Gaiutra Bahadur '97JRN is the author of the forthcoming Coolie Woman: The Odyssey of Indenture.



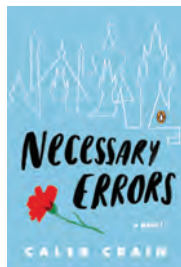


The Love Affairs of Nathaniel P.

By Adelle Waldman
(Henry Holt,
256 pages, \$25)

Chances are that anyone who has spent time in Brooklyn over the last decade knows a Nate Piven. The “product of a postfeminist, 1980s childhood and politically correct, 1990s college education,” he is a freelance writer with a Harvard degree and an enviable but not life-changing book deal. In *The Love Affairs of Nathaniel P.*, the crisp, keenly observant debut novel from Adelle Waldman ’03JRN, the issue is how he deals with women. After spending his twenties hoping to meet a girl who reads Svevo or Bernhard on the subway, he is almost too successful in his thirties: “The more his byline appeared, the more appealing they found him.” But they want commitment, something he isn’t sure he’s ready to give, even to Hannah, who finally seems right — relaxed, pretty, Svevo-reading, and “almost universally regarded as nice and smart.” Much has been written about the Nates of the world (Keith Gessen’s *All the Sad Young Literary Men* is the most obvious and perfectly titled prelude). What makes this take so interesting is that Waldman is a woman, entering Nate’s fictional psyche in what almost feels like a reconnaissance mission on behalf of her gender. Why does this kind of modern man act the way he does? Waldman can’t provide us with a clear answer, but at least her subject comes across as appropriately tortured on the matter. “Contrary to what these women seemed to think,” we are told, Nate “was not indifferent to their unhappiness. And yet he seemed, in spite of himself, to provoke it.”

— Rebecca Shapiro



Necessary Errors

By Caleb Crain
(Penguin,
480 pages, \$16)

Prague, in the fall of 1990, was a city just starting to come to terms with its new freedoms, trying them on like the blue jeans beginning to appear in stores (though inaccessible to most, costing two weeks of a still state-regulated salary). It is, in this way, the perfect sanctuary for Jacob Putnam, a foundingling on unsteady footing and the quiet hero of *Necessary Errors*, the ambitious first novel from journalist and literary critic Caleb Crain ’99GSAS. Jacob, a recent college graduate who left his Boston office job to teach English abroad, quickly teams up with a group of similarly minded young expats, who meet in pubs to drink cheap beer and talk about what they want to do with their lives, while actually taking comfort in avoiding that very choice. As Jacob says, “Being here is what you’re doing, when you’re here.” Jacob has another layer of early-twenties existential angst: he has recently come out of the closet, and Prague is forcing him at least partially back into secrecy, to his frustration, and, at the same time, his relief. There’s not quite enough plot to justify five hundred pages, and the endless banter of the expat circle grows tiresome, especially after one of Jacob’s American friends moves to Prague and joins them. Far more interesting are the supporting Czech characters — a grumpy landlord, a warm-hearted neighbor, a group of politically active chemists seeking English lessons. Between them and his masterful attention to detail, Crain creates a nuanced portrait of a city toddling toward change.

— RS



A Ship Without a Sail: The Life of Lorenz Hart

By Gary Marmorstein
(Simon & Schuster,
531 pages, \$17)

Columbia Journalism School dropout Lorenz Hart, one of the top-of-the-tree American lyricists, grew up in a ram-bunctious immigrant home on 119th Street. He was “gnomish,” homosexual, disheveled, overgenerous, alcoholic, and brilliant. He met Columbia College soon-to-be-dropout Richard Rodgers in 1919 — composer Rodgers was good-looking, heterosexual, dapper, and disciplined — and they collaborated on the 1920 Varsity Show. The partnership, though it became increasingly strained, created more than two dozen musicals, including *A Connecticut Yankee*, *On Your Toes*, *Babes in Arms*, *The Boys from Syracuse*, *Pal Joey*, and hundreds of songs, including “Manhattan,” “Spring Is Here,” “My Funny Valentine,” and “Bewitched, Both-ered, and Bewildered.”

Hart’s alcoholic binges and disappearances worsened over the years, and Rodgers found his partner’s unreliability impossible to deal with. Rodgers began working with Oscar Hammerstein II ’16CC shortly before Hart died in 1943 at forty-eight, and, as Gary Marmorstein writes in his intensely researched and entirely enjoyable biography, Rodgers’s resentment had by then turned to revulsion.

Hart’s lyrics are lovely, his rhyme schemes unexpected, and his texts much closer to real speech than the songs of the early 1900s. His love songs are sweetly longing. Marmorstein hears in them the words of the outsider, the homely, closeted homosexual looking in at the party. Could be, or maybe he could just make words sing.

— Michael B. Shavelson

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COURTESY OF MAISON FRANÇAISE

French Toast

Columbia's Maison Française has a long tradition of hosting the leading figures of French culture. Take this *après-guerre* run: Sartre spoke here in 1945. Camus spoke in 1946. Piaf spoke — and sang — in 1947. And in 1948, film star Charles Boyer (above, surrounded by adoring Columbia and Barnard students) spoke, mostly in French, to the French Club.

The Maison Française was established by Columbia president Nicholas Murray Butler in 1913 as a “center for the study of French civilization and French literature” — the first French cultural institute on an American campus. That inaugural year, Butler, a man of grand gesture and grander influence, brought the French philosopher Henri Bergson to Morningside Heights as a visiting professor. More recently, the Mai-

son has hosted *Shoah* filmmaker Claude Lanzmann, writer and professor emerita Maryse Condé, economist Thomas Piketty, and philosopher Jacques Rancière.

In 1966, the Maison Française moved from its original townhouse at 411 West 117th Street; a decade later it arrived at its current home in Buell Hall, where it has sponsored conferences, talks, debates, and film screenings to promote intellectual and cultural exchanges not just with France, but with the entire French-speaking world.

Now, in 2013, the Maison Française is toasting its centenary with events throughout the year, starting with an exhibit in Buell Hall, on view through October 30. Curated by Maison Française director Shanny Peer, and jointly organized by the Maison Française and the Rare Book and Manuscript Division

of Columbia Libraries, the exhibit includes documents, program materials, audio recordings, and photographs of distinguished thinkers, artists, and *vedettes de cinéma*.

Charles Boyer was a cultural ambassador par excellence, if his trip to Columbia is any clue. The *Spectator* reported that Boyer, in town to act in an English adaptation of Sartre's play *Les Mains sales*, left the Maison Française after his talk to find a group of teenagers “waiting breathlessly” to ask for his autograph. “He cheerfully signed the slips of paper handed him,” wrote the *Spec*, “stating, ‘I never understood what value they would have.’”

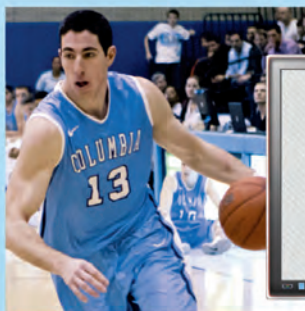
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