

Five students arrested in drug bust, plead not guilty

Students sell to undercover cops out of fraternities, dorms

BY SARAH DARVILLE
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

After a five-month investigation, a group of Columbia students were arrested Tuesday morning for selling thousands of dollars worth of drugs out of fraternity houses and dorm rooms.

Five students pleaded not guilty Tuesday afternoon and remain in custody after the on-campus drug bust, which the New York City Special Narcotics Prosecutors Office labeled “Operation Ivy League.”

“These students were playing with fire.”

—Bridget Brennan,
Special Narcotics prosecutor

Harrison David, SEAS ’12; Chris Coles, CC ’12; Adam Klein, CC ’12; Jose Stephan Perez (known as Stephan Vincenzo), CC ’12; and Michael Wymbbs, SEAS ’11, were charged with selling cocaine, marijuana, MDMA, Adderall, and LSD, according to the Special Narcotics Prosecutor’s Office.

All five students were arraigned in Manhattan Supreme Court, where a judge set bail amounts ranging from \$20,000 cash for Perez to \$50,000 cash for David.

A spokesperson for the Narcotics Prosecutor’s Office said the only one prepared to post bail was Wymbbs, who was

expected to be released Tuesday night. The other four were taken to Rikers Island.

Prosecutors say the students sold most of the drugs out of common areas and bedrooms of the Alpha Epsilon Pi, Pi Kappa Alpha, and Psi Upsilon fraternity houses on 114th Street. Drugs were also sold from rooms in the Intercultural House and East Campus. Altogether, the students had made nearly \$11,000 in sales to undercover officers since July.

Tuesday morning, officers searched the students’ rooms and found an additional \$2,000 worth of drugs, including 50 ecstasy capsules, Adderall pills, a half-pound of marijuana, and a bottle of LSD, which prosecutors say was applied to Altoids and SweetTarts.

“I just sell it to pay tuition,” Coles said as he was being arrested at 6:20 a.m., according to documents from the assistant district attorney.

David told a detective, “Why do you think I have to do this shit? He [my father] won’t pay my tuition.”

A student who answered the door at Pi Kappa Alpha on Tuesday said the fraternity would not comment, as did a student at Alpha Epsilon Pi. The president of Psi Upsilon, Jordan Callaway, SEAS ’11, said he could not comment due to national fraternity protocol.

A spokesperson from the Special Narcotics Prosecutor’s Office said that David was the main target of the investigation and was the only student to sell cocaine, including an \$880 sale of nearly 20 grams on Sept. 7. The officers’ first several



JASPER L. CLYATT / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

BUSTED | Prosecutors say students sold drugs out of several fraternities, including Psi Upsilon fraternity house on 114th Street, above.

purchases were all from David, and the investigation expanded to include the other four students in October and November.

“The students arrested today supplied dangerous substances to their friends and other students to turn a quick profit, but subjected themselves to risks, of which they were either ignorant or in denial. These students were playing with fire,” Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan said in a statement.

Coles sold marijuana exclusively, including a \$5,000 sale of 1.5 pounds on Nov. 23. Klein, who competed on the fencing team last year, sold LSD exclusively, including the LSD on Altoids.

Wymbbs, who served as the Engineering Student Council’s vice president for the class of 2011 in 2007-2008 and later as academic affairs representative, sold ecstasy and LSD on SweetTarts. Perez sold ecstasy, marijuana, and Adderall, the spokesperson confirmed.

At the arraignment, defense lawyers spoke highly of the defendants’ grades and extracurriculars, the spokesperson said.

On campus, students like Destiny Sullens, CC ’11 and an Intercultural House resident, said they were shocked by the police raid.

“It was very loud, very aggressive, the way it went down,”

Sullens said. “It was really early this morning. ... I still haven’t quite come to terms with it.”

Sullens said she heard police enter the brownstones with battering rams. “I personally thought it was an earthquake,” she said.

A housing services employee next door to the frats in the Broadway dorm, who requested anonymity out of concern for his job, also witnessed the raid.

“I’d never seen anything like it,” the employee said. “They came in there knowing what they were looking for.”

In a statement sent to students, Dean of Student Affairs Kevin Shollenberger said, “This

morning the NYPD arrested five Columbia students in connection with an investigation into illegal drug activity. The alleged behavior of the students involved in this incident goes against not only state and federal law, but also University policy and the principles we have set—and strive together to maintain—for our community. Please rest assured we are taking this matter very seriously.”

A University spokesperson would not comment further on Columbia’s interactions with the NYPD or other city law enforcement agencies, though a

SEE DRUG BUST, page 2



ZARA CASTANY / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

JOB SEARCH | The Coalition to Preserve Community protests outside Columbia’s employment center.

Residents protest CU employment practices

BY ABBY MITCHELL
Columbia Daily Spectator

West Harlem residents and members of the Coalition to Preserve Community braved a 30-degree chill Tuesday afternoon and assembled outside the University’s Employment Information Center on 125th Street to protest Columbia’s employment practices.

“The Columbia expansion plan was approved in part because they indicated they would be providing jobs ... and that the community would be given priority for those jobs,” said Ruth Eisenberg, one of the founders of CPC. “Instead of providing jobs, they provide employment offices that do not provide jobs.”

The Employment Information Center opened five years ago in West Harlem with the intention of providing career services to community members.

The University released a press release Tuesday, outlining the services that the center provides, including live training workshops, online training programs, one-on-one counseling, and referral services.

But CPC members say these services are not being provided and allege that the University has failed to provide statistics on the number of referrals made by the office.

“How are you ever going to know whether the University is meeting the promise on which approval of its project was based if they’re not forthright about the jobs they provide?” Eisenberg asked.

Columbia said that the center has hired over 900 local residents, in a wide range of jobs since it opened. “Columbia is a major employer in New York City and specifically Upper Manhattan. Its workforce is

highly diverse in socioeconomic background and professional experience,” the statement read, adding that the University awarded 68 percent of the project area’s construction contracts to minority-, women-, or locally-owned firms, from August 2008 through September 2010.

Approximately 30 protesters, many carrying signs criticizing Columbia, chanting “Harlem is not for sale.”

Neighborhood resident Lestor Perto said he was encouraged by the initiative. “If nobody says nothing, nothing will happen.”

Harlem resident Joan Fernandez said she was skeptical that there were real opportunities available through Columbia. “I’ve seen a lot of community newspapers that advertise job training ... but not Columbia,”

SEE PROTEST, page 2

After rezone, 125th slow to develop

BY DAPHNE CHEN
Columbia Daily Spectator

More than two years after the city passed plans to rezone Harlem’s historic thoroughfare, few development projects are actually pushing forward on 125th Street.

In 2008, a rezoning plan for 125th Street—known for bustling nightlife and jazz at the Apollo Theater—went through the City Council, calling for more retail activity, taller buildings, and an increase in affordable housing.

“Our rezoning plan for 125th Street will spur new investment as well as a range of cultural and retail opportunities,” said chair of the City Planning Commission Amanda M. Burden in an October 2007 press release. “This comprehensive initiative will fulfill the promise of Harlem’s Main Street as a vibrant corridor and a premier arts, entertainment and commercial destination in the City.”

Local politicians such as Councilwoman Inez Dickens who championed the rezoning envisioned a revitalized Harlem with new restaurants, shops, arts venues and housing, a chunk of which would be income-targeted affordable housing.

But now, some Harlem residents say they have not seen progress, and that the economic

Development on 125th

This is the first article in a series on Harlem’s zoning.

Harlem lights up from Hudson to East River

BY GINA LEE
Columbia Daily Spectator

Harlem brightened up Tuesday night, in a ceremony that lit holiday lights on 125th Street across the entire width of Manhattan for the first time—from the Hudson to the East River.

When the 125th Street Business Improvement District announced earlier this year that it wouldn’t be able to fund Harlem Holiday Lights for the second year in a row, Harlem community boards 9, 10, and 11 decided to join together to raise the \$60,000 needed to put up the lights.

“This is the beginning of all of us uniting,” said Barbara Askins, president and CEO of the 125th Street BID, as she welcomed the crowd gathered on Harlem’s main thoroughfare. “The whole community has come together to make sure 125th Street has lights.”

The night’s festivities began

with Harlem’s first ever tree lighting ceremony at the West Harlem Piers Park, followed by another lighting ceremony at the State Office Building on 125th Street and Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard.

“We’re very excited to be part of this,” said John Herrold, Riverside Park Fund president and administrator of the park, which agreed to host the tree lighting after being approached by Community Board 9’s Parks Committee. “We certainly hope it will become a tradition.”

Herrold led the crowd in a countdown, and locals in attendance cheered as the lights on the tree switched on. A group of students from the Harlem Village Academies High School caroled as they headed down 125th Street toward the State Office Building, joining other neighborhood groups, like the

SEE LIGHTS, page 2



ARVIN AHMADI FOR SPECTATOR

LIGHT IN THE DARK | This year’s Harlem Holiday Lights lit up 125th from the East River to the Hudson for the first time ever.

OPINION, PAGE 4

Let’s be honest

Amanda Gutterman on academic integrity.

No dialogue

Sometimes talking isn’t enough.



SPORTS, PAGE 5

Men’s basketball pulls out 77-71 victory

The Lions pulled ahead early and led the entire game against Wagner. The victory moves the team above .500 for the first time all season.

EVENTS

Who Brings the Water?

Learn about the challenges of the water sector in Niger.
208 Knox Hall, 4:30 p.m.

Nursing Home Care Paradox

Attend a seminar on ensuring quality of life, and fostering dignity in death.
Davis Auditorium, CEPSR, 6 p.m.

WEATHER

Today



35°/23°

Tomorrow



33°/24°

After investigation, five arrested in drug bust

DRUG BUST from front page

spokesperson for the narcotics prosecutor said that Columbia did play a role in the arrests.

“Columbia helped us in making the arrests this morning and facilitated it for us, and it went very smoothly with their help. They were not involved in the investigation,” the spokesperson said, adding that it is unclear whether the University will continue be involved.

Mark Williams, executive director of the International Office of Psi Upsilon, said his organization would cooperate with the University and local authorities.

“We will have a staff member there on campus tomorrow to support the other members of the chapter through this ... but we’ll also be there to work with the college and make sure they get whatever information they need to get,” Williams said.

“We have to find ... out if this was an individual acting by themselves, or if other members knew about it,” he added. “There are all sorts of things we can do short of revoking a charter.”

Williams said that, even if an individual within the fraternity acted without his brothers’ knowledge, the national fraternity would still be likely to take action.

“In the range of New York City, I’m assuming they’re really not the big fish,” said Katharine Celentano, GS and a member of Students for Sensible Drug Policy, who said she doesn’t believe the arrests will do anything to curb the dangers associated with drug use.

The five-month investigation also led to the arrests of three of the students’ suppliers, including Miron Sarzynski, a cocaine dealer who is also facing kidnapping charges.

One student who requested anonymity, and who belongs

to a fraternity involved in the drug bust, said, “I’m as good as I can be, knowing that my friends are going to prison.”

On campus, students had mixed reactions to the bust.

“I feel bad for them,” Carina Un, BC ’11, said, adding that she thinks the students are being targeted because Columbia is in a major city. “Other Ivy League institutions are in the middle of nowhere.”

Others were not so sympathetic.

“It’ll teach them a lesson,” Adam Herrada, GS, said. “Coming to Columbia for a degree, leaving Columbia to go to jail...you get involved with the wrong crowd, sooner or later it’ll catch up with you.”

University President Lee Bollinger declined to comment.

Sonalee Rau, Sammy Roth, and Karla Jimenez contributed reporting.

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Harlem lights up from Hudson to East River

LIGHTS from front page

Renaissance Youth Theater and Impact dance group.

“Just in a couple of moments, the whole 125th Street is going to show light and bright and show the whole city that Harlem is for real, come uptown, and be part of the community,” said Marcus Samuelsson, owner of the Red Rooster restaurant, before leading the countdown to the State Office Building lighting.

“It’s a beautiful night to be in Harlem,” said Franc Perry, chair of Community Board 10, to the crowd as they sang along and danced.

“We see it as the focal point to spread things out, but it’s

increasing people’s interests to volunteer and get involved,” Askins said of the “Harlem, Light It Up!” campaign launched to promote the event. “It’s starting to generate a buzz and an energy, and I firmly believe that we have such great resources in Harlem, and pulling them together can do nothing but good. Why do we have to take our kids somewhere else to see fantastic decorations?”

The campaign included two fundraisers held at local restaurants Settepani and Gran Piatto D’Oro and a promotional music video. The Hip Hop Culture Center at Frederick Douglass Boulevard and 124th Street recorded the song “Turn the Lights

On” by Mecka/Melanie, featuring local politicians and Harlem’s own residents.

Askins said the Harlem Business Alliance has already offered support for next year, when organizers hope to expand the lights beyond 125th Street.

Petal Lergie, Harlem resident, said she was comforted by her residents’ willingness to contribute to the event even in poor economic times.

“I think of all the changes going on—this is proof that the ... spirit is still there,” Lergie said.

Harlem resident Desi Edwards added, “For a few years, it’s been on a down slope. In a few years, it could be like Rockefeller.”

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Residents protest CU employment practices

PROTEST from front page

she said. “Maybe they’re helping their graduates, but not us.”

Linda Burton, a 40-year-old mother making \$7.25 an hour, said she has little luck at the office. “I would love to see the day when I could make \$10 an hour. I would love to have a better job.”

Burton was among a number of protestors who had been to the employment office.

“They were nice—they tried to help me, or at least they pretended to,” she said. But she

was not placed in a job, and the only time she heard back from Columbia was when it called her for a five-minute survey evaluating the University’s services. “I felt that I was ignored.”

The protest also drew Columbia students, who said that there are groups on campus who are receptive to residents’ demands and feel that the job center should be made more effective.

“The University is behaving like a corporation, which is unacceptable,” Pavi Mehta, CC ’11, said. “It’s really neighbors

evicting neighbors.”

Lindsey Cornum, CC ’11, volunteered at the protest by making posters and distributing fliers. On the issue of the expansion and the local job market, Cornum said Columbia needs to be held accountable, and that students are instrumental to those efforts.

“Columbia does have a community to answer to,” she said. “Once you attack people’s livelihood, it’s hard to keep them quiet.”

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Development slows on 125th, despite rezoning

REZONING from front page

recession halted many developers in their tracks, leaving behind streets of vacant buildings.

“Everything’s moving at a snail’s pace, as opposed to the way things were going five, six years ago, when you saw construction seemingly overnight,” said lifelong resident Zenola Smalls, who sells CDs on 125th. “Because the economy collapsed, you see very little if any new construction.”

Two neighborhood projects, though, have made progress. Across from the famous Apollo Theater, for example, is the hulking shell of a storefront called Mart 125. This 17,400 square foot city-owned building housed a thriving flea market for street vendors from 1986 until 2001, when the city shut it down due to the building’s deterioration and mismanagement.

After years of discussion,

the New York City Economic Development Corporation decided in late 2009 to lease the space to two cultural groups: the National Jazz Museum, currently located in East Harlem, and ImageNation, which will provide movie screenings, spoken word events and live music.

“Once it [NYC EDC] selects the developer from all the proposals, then the process will move into the next step,” said National Jazz Museum Executive Director Loren Schoenberg. “We’ve already raised \$10 million of the \$20 million that we need to move into Mart 125.”

Schoenberg estimates that the process will still take a couple of years before the museum can move in.

Still, just down the street from Smalls’ booth, an empty property stands at the corner of 125th Street and 8th Avenue. Once the location of over a dozen different

locally-owned businesses, including the local soul food haunt Manna’s, it now stands boarded up and covered in graffiti.

The Victoria Theater, a historic Harlem landmark that closed in 1990, has similarly been neglected in the rezoning initiatives, despite hopes that the rezoning would encourage arts and entertainment venues along 125th Street.

Ryan Fitzgibbon, spokesperson for the Department of Buildings, said the DOB has not seen applications for developing the Victoria Theater in the last 10 years.

Despite uncertainty over local development, some residents say they’ve noticed positive change.

“Look at the stores, the shops, look at the people walking on the street,” said Harlem resident and street vendor Laheen Allah. “There’s more diversity in Harlem now than ever before.”

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For now, Powell to focus on Light Blue season

POWELL from page 5

free record, and then breaking it twice more that year.

Powell’s junior year was even better, and was spurred in part due to an increased training regimen over the summer.

“I made changes between sophomore and junior year,” Powell said. “I started swimming year-round and I saw the improvement right away. I saw the benefits of full time training.”

Powell’s improvement since he stepped foot on campus was also noticed by his head coach Jim Bolster.

“Adam’s improvement since he arrived on campus as a freshman has been steady and significant,” the head coach said. “The most obvious improvement is the amount of time he has dropped in his three events, but I believe he has made even greater strides in his approach to swimming.”

Of these changes, Bolster said, “In high school Adam could just show up and win. He did not train much nor did he spend any extra time other than the 20 plus seconds it took him to swim his race thinking about swimming. He knew he was fast and that he would win and he was comfortable with that. In college I think Adam has come to realize that his natural skills only take him so far; if he wants to win at the highest levels he must train and think at the highest levels. As a result his attitude towards training and his training habits, his weight room routine, his nutritional practices, and his understanding of the need for a year-round perspective have all time improvements.”

Powell broke the school record for the 100 free as a junior, and went undefeated in the 100 free and 50 free all year. Powell was the Ivy champion in both events. Powell was also named to the Mid-Major all-America first team once, the first-team all-Ivy twice, and led the swimming and diving team to a third place finish in the Ivy League—the team’s best finish in years.

Powell has gotten off to another strong start this year, as he is undefeated in both the 50 and 100 free, and set pool records in the two events earlier this year. Powell won three events this past weekend at the Big Al Invitational, including another victory in the 100 free where he won easily with a time of 43.77 seconds. Powell also won the 50 free and the 100 backstroke.

Powell has set his sights firmly on the Olympic trials for the London 2012 games, despite the

fact that he has never been to an Olympic trial—having missed the cutoff for the 2008 games by two-tenths of a second.

“First off, it’s the year after I graduate, and I would be doing a disservice by not going after it for one more year,” said Powell when asked of his motivation. “Secondly, I think I have a legit shot at making the team. And finally, I’ve never had a full year to focus exclusively on swimming.”

Powell will train at Columbia after the swimming and diving season ends in March, and will then train out of his home.

“I met a coach during my sophomore year, and I’ll train with him in Rockland, N.Y.,” Powell said.

In the meantime, coach Bolster is fully supportive of Powell’s lofty goals. “We think Adam’s Olympic aspirations are great and a natural outcome of all the improvements he has made since arriving on campus,” Bolster said. “To make Olympic trials he will have to continue to work hard acclimating to swimming meters. The longer pool puts a premium on technique over power and Adam does not have a great deal of meter/long course training and racing experience.”

“The quality that makes Adam one of the best Ivy swimmers is his insatiable desire to be the best/fastest,” continued Bolster. “Adam likes speed! He likes it when people talk about someone being ‘the fastest.’ Right now he is the fastest in the Ivy League, but Adam will not be satisfied until he owns that moniker at the national level. If he wins a national title he will put his name in the conversation for an Olympic team spot.”

When it comes to Olympic swimming, however, there is only one name that comes to mind: Michael Phelps.

“He sheds a lot of light on our sport,” Powell said. “That goes without saying.”

But Phelps had publicly expressed a desire to become a sprinter for the 2012 Olympics. Will Powell have to face off with Phelps for a spot on the team?

“Thankfully, he doesn’t swim the 50 free,” Powell said. “I don’t think the 50 is something he would do, I think the 100 is.”

No matter what happens in the future, Powell has found his passion in the pool.

“The 50 free is the reason why I swim,” he said. “It’s a short burst of adrenaline, two laps, 20 seconds. All-out max effort. I like the idea of going fast, generating the most power and speed.”

If Powell’s speed measures up in the years to come, he may just be walking in the opening ceremonies of the 2012 Olympic games.

A few quick words for a sports idol

PAGELS from page 5

could say to this guy about 30 times a day. It kept me awake at night mulling it over. How could I possibly tell him how much he meant to me in such a short amount of time? I was afraid I was going to be like a preteen girl backstage at a Hannah Montana concert. My voice was just going to turn into Raymond Babbitt’s when I approached him.

I wanted to dress up in a Josh Freeman jersey or some other joke from his podcast. Then I considered a Columbia sweater so other MoHi Simmons fans could find me. But in the end, I just went with my Dirk Nowitzki shirt to rep my hometown.

By the time I got on the subway, I still had no idea what to say. When I got to the bookstore, the line was all the way to the second floor. I spent the entire wait talking to the people in line with me. It’s truly an awesome experience being around hundreds of people who have the same diehard obsession with a sportswriter. Movie and sports fans get to experience this all the time when they go to midnight premieres or live sporting events. Even Harry Potter fans have midnight book release parties. Fans of authors, on the other hand, usually never experience such collective appreciation.

It made me realize that I could really be friends with anyone who was also a fan of Simmons. (In fact, if there are any Simmons fans reading this who want to watch football on Sundays, please send me an email.) The guy’s body of work is just so immense that you can talk about it for hours with anyone.

By the time I finally made my way to the front of the line, it almost played out like the scene from “October Sky” when Jake Gyllenhaal finally meets the German rocket scientist he’d been writing to the whole movie.

I shook his hand and handed him my copy of his book. While he signed, I asked him a couple of quick questions I had from his previous column and told him a couple of thoughts I had on his podcast. At the end, though, all I could do was say, “Thanks.”

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Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Nichols Lewis

ACROSS
1 Red, traveler's stat
4 Spinnaker, e.g.
8 Tending to hang down
14 Treasure de la Sierra Madre
15 "M*A*S*H" star
16 Merited
17 Kung ___ chicken
18 Members of a small army
20 Lumbering critter of Borneo
22 Conger catcher
23 Publoize
24 Delivery experts, for short
27 Remnant
28 Stuffed
31 "Knock it off!"
32 Poker play
34 Gummy co-worker?
36 Some Steinways
40 WWII depth charge targets
41 Bungling
42 Any day now
43 Bite like a beaver
44 Construction beam
48 Loud laugh
49 Japanese veggie
51 Take potshots
52 Game often involving a windmill
57 Pluto, now
59 Former CNN anchor Dobbs
60 Wreck, as plans
61 Losing proposition?
62 Soul, to Sartre
63 Start liking
64 WWII Normandy battle site
65 OPEC unit

DOWN
1 Swabbed
2 Bedtime ritual for many
3 Provider of millions of hits
4 Woodlands dolly

5 Lip balm ingredient
6 Pastoral verse
7 Cut with a surgical beam
8 Indian metropolis
9 Tool for scouting pitchers
10 "Are you out ___?"
11 Court that may diffuse anger
12 Part of 1-Across
13 QB's gains
19 Birthstone after sapphire
21 "When Harry Met Sally..." co-star
25 Doolus
26 1974 CIA spoof
28 Fragrant evergreens
29 ___ Today
30 Red Square honoree
31 Restaurant host's purview
33 FBI employee
34 Gush
35 Barely beat
36 Not taking calls, perhaps

37 "___ Ben Adhem"
James Leigh Hunt poem
38 Web surfer's shortcut
39 Paternity suit letters
43 Intent
45 Class with dissections, for short
46 Poise
47 Gas up

49 Not qualified
50 Double: Pref.
51 Brief brawl
53 Wrath, in a hymn title
54 Smidgens
55 Military group
56 Casting need
57 Banned bug killer
58 "Are ___ pair?"
"Send in the Clowns" lyric

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

C	O	R	E	D	P	L	E	A	T	M	C	L
A	P	O	L	O	G	O	M	P	H	T	R	A
R	H	Y	M	E	I	V	O	R	Y	S	N	O
T	E	A	S	O	N	E	M	E	T	A	L	
A	L	L	P	E	T	A	P	E	L	I	K	E
L	I	T	T	E	R	B	U	G	S	F	E	E
K	A	Y	A	K	R	E	A	P	R	O	S	
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J	E	E	R	C	O	S	M	I	C	D	U	S
I	N	V	I	T	E	S	R	O	I	C	P	A
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A	R	T	E	A	S	E	D	T	R	A	I	L
S	S	S	E	R	A	S	E	B	U	N	N	Y

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Don't cheat on me

One night, I came home from seventh grade to inform my parents that I had been asked to sign a contract that said I would comply with the school honor code. The discussion of cheating felt very adult, and I was gleeful to be inducted into the community of potential plagiarists. Quickly, the bubble burst. As it turned out, I had promised not only to refrain from plagiarism myself, but also to report any one of my peers who violated the code. My father launched the impossible question: would you ever turn someone in? No, we agreed. At age twelve, I had signed the first contract that I fully intended to break.

Why do students cheat? In an effort to answer this question, an anonymous writer dubbed “the shadow scholar” revealed to The Chronicle of Higher Education the secret workings of a business that thrives off of students’ appetite for custom-written papers. This “scholar” finds that the educational system has failed most of its students and, with its emphasis on graded evaluation over personal development, has become a hollow social construct rather than a meaningful learning experience. Students—and he takes on clients in programs that range from masters and doctoral programs to nursing and seminary courses—want their degrees, but choose to “opt out” of completing the required work.

Though I lack the evidence to support it, I suspect that tests and cheating on tests have existed for the same



AMANDA
GUTTERMAN

The Far Side of the Familiar

amount of time. So I do not believe that students today are innately lazier or less “moral” than those of the past. Rather, we can access the giant porthole to iniquity called the Internet. Not only can we scour for sources online (the scholar “hasn’t been to a library once” on the job), but we can also locate professionals who offer to assemble them, for a price. The demand has always existed; the Internet just enables the “supply” to rise up and meet it.

That explanation seems simple enough, but what is the solution? The scholar writes, hauntingly, that he’s “never had a client complain that he’d been expelled from school, that the originality of his work had been questioned, that some disciplinary action had been taken.” After all, a custom essay is difficult to detect in a large lecture with scant opportunity for in-class evaluation. Maybe professors shouldn’t bother—maybe even the American attitude toward cheating is singular and puritanical. But wouldn’t the value of a degree plummet as a result?

Perhaps I am a tight-ass who wants everyone to suffer, or at least to work as diligently as I do.

Perhaps it has happened already, and the process of obtaining a degree has become unglued from the process of using it. Does a nurse or an engineer really need to know how to write an essay? Students have complained that parts of education are impractical since the dawn of human history. I hear about it every day in CC. Now, the change is that students are empowered to make the executive decision on what they “need” to do. And the answer, at least from the article, is: not much. While a professor earnestly

babbles about “learning to think,” his Machiavellian pupil has one eye on his phone and the other on his screen that flashes from ESPN and Hulu to Cramster and GradeSaver to this shadow guy in a single tap.

Why does this make my blood boil? Perhaps I am a tight-ass who wants everyone to suffer, or at least to work as diligently as I do. Whether or not I choose to accept that, I think there is more at stake. Believe me when I say that I am not one to moralize—professional plagiarism would not scare me so much if I truly believed that the job or graduate school ahead could distinguish me from a cheater. Unfortunately, I do not. With the sheer volume of applications, how can we invest our faith in the powers of discernment of authorities who have failed time and time again? Certainly, the students who do their work because they are interested in the material get their reward, but there is no good reason to allow them to be swindled out of the external recognition that is their due.

The Chronicle article demonstrates that the shadow’s sector of business is picking up speed. Recently Spectator announced that “reports of plagiarism are on the rise at Barnard,” and there is no reason to assume that conditions across the road are any different. Professor Marina Cords explained that students cheat when they are “desperate,” but when have we not been desperate? The Internet enables plagiarism to such a degree that it demands a radical rethinking of both the aims and the measuring tools associated with traditional education. Unless professors can combine their cogitative forces to convince students to do their work, someone must figure out a way to contain this monster before it devours the modern degree for all it is worth.

Amanda Gutterman is a Columbia College sophomore majoring in English. The Far Side of the Familiar runs alternate Wednesdays.

Actions speak louder than words

BY DINA OMAR, RANDA MAY WAHBE,
TANYA KEILANI, AND ALAA MILBES

Nearly half a dozen articles have been written attempting to decipher why Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine refuses to “dialogue” with Hillel and affiliated organizations. All the articles about C-SJP’s stance disregard a fundamental point: “Dialogue” gifts the oppressor legitimacy and takes power away from the oppressed. In other words, participating in dialogue, even on college campuses, works to help Israel ignore and sustain the occupation and chokes Palestinian resistance.

C-SJP’s policy has been characterized as “counterproductive” and stifling. In a recent op-ed (“Perspectives on checkpoints,” Nov. 21) Jonah Liben stated that “by refusing to program events together,” C-SJP avoids “discussing difficult subjects. As students and future leaders, it is our duty to leave our comfort zones.” However, dialogue on campuses shifts the focus away from Israel-Palestine and onto our campus. What does that say about our power and privilege? As a group in solidarity with the Palestinians who face grave injustices every day, we seek to take students out of their comfort zones to realize that we as Americans are complicit in Israel’s occupation. Conversing about semantics, the necessity of checkpoints, the definition of occupation, or whether or not an occupation exists evades the very essence of the actual situation. While dialogue is being presented as an option to create a solution, the reality is that, during these peace talks and attempts at dialogue, Palestine is shrinking while Israel is expanding. The type of dialogue that Hillel and other pro-Zionist groups on campus seek is one that completely ignores the power structure of Israel and the Palestinians. In solidarity with the Palestinians, C-SJP recognizes the power imbalance and refuses to perpetuate it by engaging in activities that deny the reality of the situation on the ground.

This discrepancy is because at a checkpoint, someone is holding the gun and someone is at the end of the barrel.

Sarah Ngu’s article in The Eye last week (“Let’s Not Talk,” Dec. 2) suggests that C-SJP members and Hillel members have differing definitions of Zionism. She says “there is a disparity between” C-SJP’s “perception of Hillel and Hillel’s self-perception.” This is true. Inevitably, a Palestinian student at a checkpoint and those in solidarity with him would view Zionism and the legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish state differently than an Israeli soldier or someone who supports Israel as a Jewish state would. This discrepancy is not because there is a lack of discussion between the two parties, nor is it because there is no codified definition of Zionism or apartheid. It is because at a checkpoint, someone is holding the gun and someone is at the end of the barrel.

Ngu states that dialogue would promote a “deeper understanding of both student groups” and describes groups like J Street as more “moderate,” suggesting that C-SJP would benefit from working with such groups. Regardless of its intentions, J Street attempts to put a more palatable, liberal face on a colonial project. Ultimately, these groups endorse the idea of Israel as a national homeland for Jews. Again, this goal is based on the absence of the indigenous people of the land. If blacks were fighting for emancipation in the antebellum South and the slave owners believed that in order to maintain the institution of slavery, they must treat their slaves better, this would not make slavery moral. The root of the problem is the institution of slavery, not the treatment of slaves. Similarly, asking Palestinians to accept the state of Israel as it stands today is asking them to participate in their own ethnic cleansing in order to seem “constructive” or diplomatic in the eyes of the colonial powers that seek to erase them.

Furthermore, the notion that Zionists may advise Palestinians on how to resist the same occupation that they refuse to oppose is tremendously problematic. You cannot simultaneously refuse to resist the occupation and dictate what “constructive” (read: legitimate) resistance looks like. You cannot write Israeli policy and, at the same time, determine how it may be resisted. The “uncomfortable” discussion Liben overlooks is the heart of the matter for Palestinians: As it exists today, Israel being premised on the death of Palestine and privileging Jews over all others is a process of ethnic cleansing.

Dina Omar is a graduate student in anthropology, Randa May Wahbe is a graduate student in public health, Tanya Keilani is a graduate student in anthropology, and Alaa Milbes is a graduate student in Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African studies. They are the Palestinian Women of Students for Justice in Palestine.

Time to kick butts

BY MARK A. COHEN

I strenuously opposed the Morningside campus 20-foot smoking prohibition considered and voted upon at last week’s University Senate plenary meeting because I believe it does not properly address the safety and sensibilities of the majority of faculty, staff and students. Rather, I enthusiastically support the outright ban that has been enacted by the Medical Center Administration and that appears to be in the process of being adopted at Barnard.

The argument that secondhand smoke has not been proven to be harmful is completely specious. Cigarette smoke contains a whole host of proven harmful substances. Though I personally don’t belabor individuals indulging in smoking, I don’t want to be a possible victim of their habit. I also resent the additional health care expense and health

I don't want to be a possible victim of their habit.

care insurance costs that I, along with all other nonsmokers, shoulder, as a result of the added medical burdens many smokers bear as a consequence of their behavior. And then there is the unsightly, unsanitary, egregious presence of cigarette butts and other residue throughout the campus.

The University has a responsibility to protect its constituents—to ensure the safety and quality of life of all who live, study and work within its confines. Policies that create linear boundaries will merely manipulate, rather than remedy, the issue at hand.

In all due deference to the Working Committee that invested a considerable amount of time in creating the recommendation that the Senate addressed, I reject its view. I believe its effort is flawed because it attempts to create a quality of life policy based upon consensus. This matter doesn’t lend itself to a consensus outcome. That is why the Medical Center, which deals with the horrors of smoking-related illness and death on a daily basis, chose to act as it did.

At the end of the day, smoking is an insidious, dangerous activity. There’s no reason whatsoever why the University should tolerate its presence anywhere on campus or in close proximity to any off-campus facilities.

Parenthetically, forgive me if I sound zealot-like in my view. In fact, I started smoking as an undergraduate at Columbia many years ago. I adopted the fearless, foolish, and careless view, shared by many of my contemporaries, that smoking was a benign habit. Thankfully, I was able to quit. Many of the people whom I know who remain smokers dearly regret their habit and are in fact victims of it. How many of us would never have become smokers if smoking had been prohibited from the Morningside campus?

Leadership in an enlightened community hinges upon defending the freedoms of individuals, while at the same time protecting the rights of the entire body at hand. A distance-based rule will merely cause smokers to congregate in limited common areas, further exacerbating the issue rather than solving it. For that reason, I urge the University Senate and University administration to reconsider the 20-foot rule and move directly and promptly to a comprehensive campus-wide smoking ban. The straw vote taken at the close of last week’s Senate plenary, in favor of an outright campus-wide ban, demonstrated overwhelming support for this view. This is a consequential issue in the work/life makeup of the University that should, at long last, be confronted and resolved.

The author is a professor at the Business School.



WENDAN LI

STAFF EDITORIAL

It happened here

Yesterday morning, five Columbia students were arrested on campus for selling cocaine, marijuana, ecstasy, Adderall, and LSD. Over the past few months, undercover officers bought almost \$8,000 worth of marijuana, \$1,000 each of cocaine and ecstasy, and \$440 of LSD from them. The majority of the sales of “Operation Ivy League” took place at Alpha Epsilon Pi, Pi Kappa Alpha, and Psi Upsilon.

Five students woke up in Columbia housing yesterday. Some of them may have woken up this morning on Rikers Island. As much as we feel like college students insulated from everything beyond the 116th Street gates, we are also adults. This happened at Columbia, and it’s a shame that we had to be reminded in such a startling way that Columbia is part of New York City—a city in the real world, with real laws to which society is all too ready to hold us accountable.

But to what extent will we hold each other accountable? Reactions on campus ranged from hysterical to bemused, from saddened and bewildered to self-righteously enraged. The most common and most visceral reaction seems to have less to do with the drug dealing itself and more to do with the stunning invasion of the real world into our collegiate bubble. How do we begin to respond to the situation when the question it raises is what, exactly, just happened?

It is particularly unclear what happened with regards to University involvement. At what point did the administration become aware that this was happening? What would have happened if the University had known about it earlier? Would it still have gone through the NYPD, or would it have dealt with the situation internally?

Moreover, because four of the students involved were members of fraternities, it is worth considering the relationship between Greek life and the University—both its

administration and its students.

With respect to the latter: Because this comes shortly after the Barnard Student Government Association’s decision to recognize sororities, it also follows a publicity campaign that focused on the general positivity and empowerment of Greek life. This juxtaposition will surely magnify what is already an inevitable push-back against fraternities and sororities at Columbia. Our notions of what constitutes Greek life here will be called into question. Nevertheless, we must remember that fraternities are composed of many more individuals than the five who were arrested. There will surely be discussion, but we should strive to have conversations that do not reinforce pre-existing divisions on campus.

Where will the University go from here? The answer to that question must address the oversight in place for frat houses. We do not know what the University will do about the drug bust, and we certainly cannot say whether or not it will consider kicking the fraternities off campus, or the extent to which other members of the fraternities were aware that this was happening, or even how any University is expected to proceed in this situation. Stereotypes aside, the relationship between fraternities and the University needs to be re-evaluated, and the University should conduct an investigation independent of the NYPD. We don’t know whether anybody even knew about this, but we do know that this happened in dorm rooms on our campus.

Columbia’s reputation will remain intact. The media attention will fade. These five of our peers will be found guilty or not guilty, but their lives will never be the same. The rest of us will watch this turn from scandal to lore, but we should not forget that it happened. And it happened here. We, as a community, are complicit in this. The actions of these students had wider consequences, but so, too, will whatever steps we take from here. And we need to consider that, and all of the implications thereof, no matter what happens next.

A meeting with the ultimate Sports Guy

I think it's safe to say that I have a slight obsession with Bill Simmons.



JIM PAGELS

On the Couch

Aside from having read every ESPN column, blog post, magazine article, and Twitter tweet that he's ever written, I've also listened to every podcast and seen every E:60 video segment he's recorded.

Oh, and his two books? I've probably read them more times than the Pope has read the Bible.

I can tell you this guy's birthday, where he lives, where he went to school, how many children he has, and what car he drives—all off the top of my head. Let's put it this way: If Bill Simmons were under age 16 (he turned 41 on Sept. 26), I would definitely be featured on an episode of "To Catch a Predator."

For those heathens unfamiliar with his work, Simmons is a columnist for ESPN.com, commonly known as "The Sports Guy." He writes a column and records a few podcasts every week, but his writing covers much more than the world of athletics. The guy is a pop culture savant, and he constantly analyzes TV, movies, and music like a regular Entertainment Weekly reporter. He even had an entire podcast this week devoted solely to breaking down MTV's "The Real World" and Bravo's "Real Housewives of Beverly Hills."

The way he writes makes him so unique in the journalism world. His range of topics is wider than Rex Ryan's waistline. From the Coen brothers to the Williams sisters, the guy seamlessly combines the worlds of sports and entertainment, making him such an influential part of my pop-culture-driven life (even if my emails never get published in his mailbag).

How could I possibly tell Bill Simmons how much he meant to me in such a short amount of time?

The Sports Guy's style of writing has inspired hundreds of today's writers and bloggers, from "The Basketball Jones" podcast in Toronto to former Ohio State backup Mark Titus' blog.

His view of the world from the perspective of a fan makes him a true pioneer, ushering in a new generation of writers and bloggers. His columns never include interviews with coaches or the view from press row. Instead, when he writes about NBA games he attends, he's sitting in his season ticket location with all the other diehards (if those exist at Clippers games).

However, the large majority of the Sports Guy's articles come from what he watches on TV at his house. The Boston sports fanatic has realized that largest population of fans isn't at the stadium or in the studio audience, but at home with a remote in hand, just like him. Show me a Frank Deford column complaining about the DirectTV NFL package.

This is what made finally meeting him in person last night so incredible for me.

I'd had the date circled on my calendar for almost a month now—the Penn Station Borders book signing for the paperback release of his New York Times No. 1 bestseller, "The Book of Basketball."

Last year, when the 700-page tome was first released, Simmons announced an extensive nationwide tour to promote the book. At the time, I was a student at the University of Texas, and I was devastated to find that he would skip over the Lone Star State altogether.

After transferring to Columbia, though, I made sure I wouldn't miss his next event. When he announced his paperback mini-tour a few weeks ago, I immediately marked my calendar. As I texted my Muslim friend back home, "Now I'll finally know what it's like for you to travel to Mecca."

The pure idea of finally meeting the man behind the curtain excited me, amazed me, and inspired me. Most of all, though, it kind of scared me.

I didn't know how much time I'd have to talk to him, but I'd been planning for months what I might say:

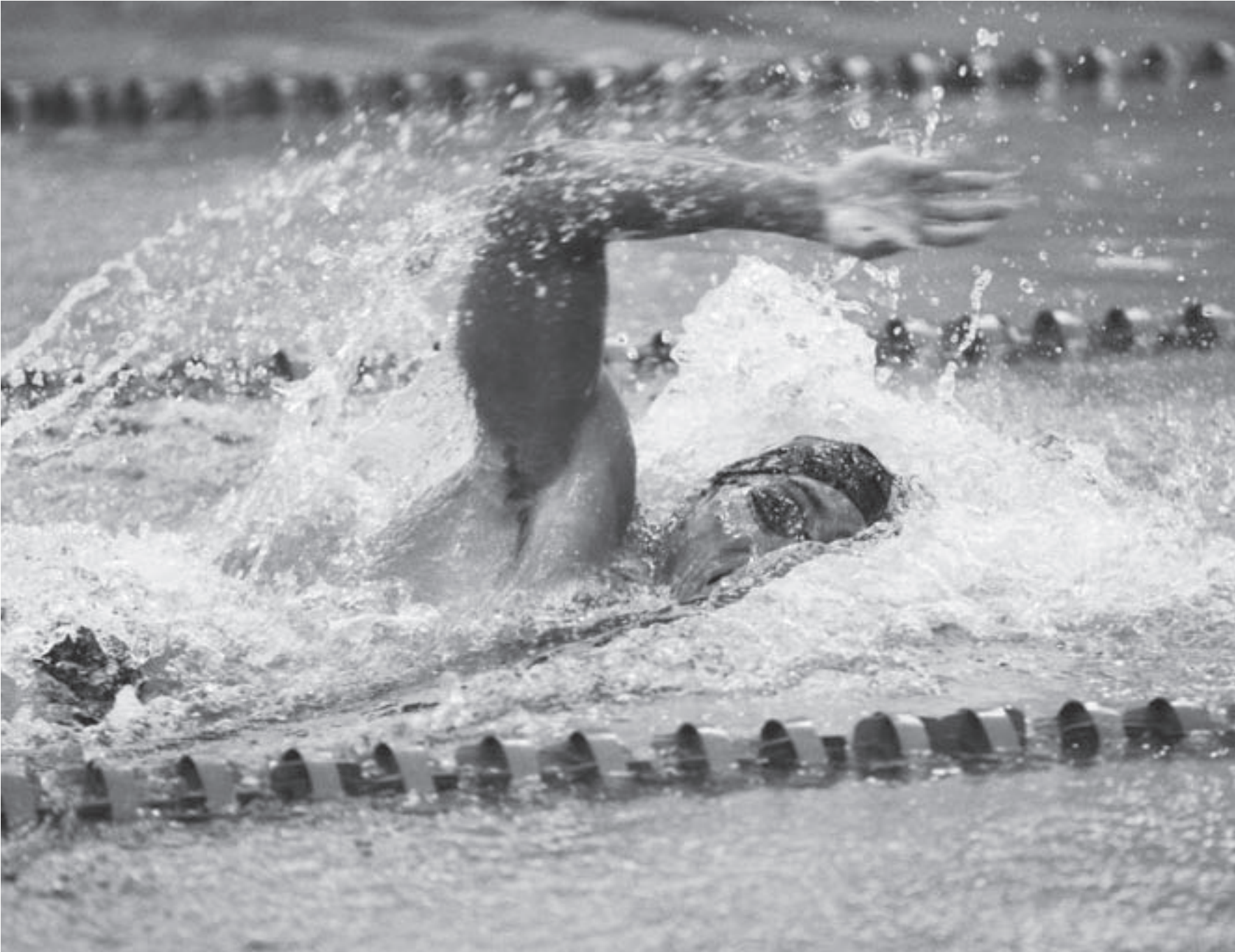
"Bill, love the books!" (Too generic.)

"How about your Pats last night?" (Too sappy.)

"Wish your daughter Zoe a happy birthday on the 19th!" (Too creepy.)

I literally thought about what I

SEE PAGELS, page 2



COURTESY OF COLUMBIA ATHLETICS

OLYMPIC DREAM | Senior freestyler Adam Powell has aspirations to compete in the 2012 Olympics after a finishing up his season and degree here at Columbia.

Swimming senior dreams big for post-graduation

BY KUNAL GUPTA
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

Everyone who plays sports has dreams. Many involve winning championships, collecting medals, and playing the sport at the highest level. For most, however, the dream ends without being fulfilled, often after high school or college. Adam Powell, a senior on the men's swimming and diving team, isn't ready to let his dreams slip away without a fight. Powell is planning on taking a year off after graduation to attempt to qualify for the 2012 Olympics in the 50 meter freestyle.

If you've walked around Morningside Heights, you probably recognize the name Adam Powell. Powell's grandfather was Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., a former New York City congressman whose name graces Seventh Avenue north of Central Park.

Powell has been carving out quite a name for himself at Columbia as well, and has already etched himself into Columbia swimming history. Powell is the school record holder in the 50 free (19.72 seconds) and 100 free (43.91

seconds) and is part of the school-record holding 200 medley team (1:29.81 minutes). Powell qualified for the NCAA Championship in the spring for the 50 free with the 18th fastest time in the nation, but failed to make it out of the preliminaries.

Powell has been swimming since he was a child, although it's fair to say the Olympic Trials were not always on his mind.

"When I was seven, I joined the town team," said Powell, who hails from Pound Ridge, N.Y. "The town summer swim team was the cool thing to do."

"I joined because it was an extracurricular activity," Powell said. "I usually went to the same park for summer camp, so now I went to camp and had practice afterward."

Powell enjoyed the sport and joined his first club team that fall when he was eight years old. But despite his fondness of the water, Powell didn't swim competitively over the summer even though swimming is a year-round sport at the highest levels.

Powell continued to swim and was on his high school's swim team, but club

teams provided the most competition and training for him as he got older and better.

"It's all about the club team," Powell said. "High school plays a part, but swimming consumes your life long before high school."

Powell was always a good swimmer but didn't start to show his true potential until his sophomore year of high school.

"Before that, I just liked to swim," said Powell. "At the end of my sophomore year I grew. I was always a tall kid, when I was a freshman I came in at like 6'1 but I grew to 6'5. That combined with hitting puberty and gaining muscle played a big part."

As Powell improved, swimming became a bigger and bigger part of his daily life.

"Swimming became my exclusive focus and I started to take training more seriously," Powell said.

It was around this time that he made a change that would change the trajectory of his career.

"I started as a backstroker, but I started to swim freestyle around then," said Powell.

As he blossomed, Powell set his sights on swimming competitively in college, and colleges set their sights on having him swim for their teams.

"Over 75 coaches called," Powell said. "It was almost every other night."

But there was one group of schools in particular that were intrigued by Powell and his potential.

"July 1 before your senior year is the first day to call, and the first two schools to call me were Harvard and Princeton."

Columbia wasn't far behind, and Powell was drawn to Morningside Heights for a number of different reasons.

"I liked the fact that it was in the city and that it was close to home," said Powell, who was ultimately deciding between Columbia and powerhouse Virginia. "I chose Columbia because I thought I could accomplish the same goals in swimming and academics at Columbia, and I felt I wouldn't have to sacrifice anything."

Powell, who swims the 50 free, 100 free, and 100 backstroke, had a strong sophomore campaign, breaking the 50

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Men's basketball still undefeated at home, downs Wagner 77-71

BY LUCAS SHAW
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

Coming into Tuesday night, Columbia had won four in a row against Wagner, all by double-digit margins. The Lions extended that streak to five, but this time it was not quite as easy.

While they did lead wire-to-wire, the Seahawks rallied again and again only to lose 77-71 in Levein Gymnasium. The Lions led by double digits at various points in both halves, but the game never felt sure until the final moments.

"That one was not picturesque from a fan's standpoint, but I knew it wouldn't be," head coach Kyle Smith said.

"That one was not picturesque from a fan's standpoint, but I knew it wouldn't be."

— Kyle Smith, men's basketball coach

One impediment was the foul troubles of Noruwa Agho, who did everything for the Light Blue in the first half, setting himself up for a triple-double with six points, six assists, and five rebounds. However, Agho sat for much of the game's final 10 minutes and fouled out with 1:37 to play. Wagner capitalized on his absence by applying pressure to the less experienced group on the floor. The Seahawks brought the game within a few points on several occasions, but Brian Barbour's clutch free throw shooting kept Wagner at bay.

"He's nails," Smith said. "He's a cerebral player and a good foul shooter."

COLUMBIA
WAGNER

77
71

Though the tight nature of the game may not have fazed Smith, it looked early on as though the Lions might cruise to victory. They jumped out to an early advantage, thanks in part to a bizarre gift. As the game was set to tip off, a technical foul was called on Wagner for a dunk during warm-ups. The Lions were awarded two free throws, which Agho promptly sank. The Light Blue took advantage of that early present and raced out to an 11-0 lead thanks to Brian Grimes' low-post moves and a pair of Steve Frankoski three-pointers.

It was not until the last third of the half that Wagner succeeded in chipping away at the Lions' lead. Trailing 27-14 at the 6:38 mark, the Seahawks went on a 10-2 run sparked by junior guard Chris Martin.

Martin, who entered the season as Wagner's leading returning scorer, has been a second fiddle to Tyler Murray for much of the year. However, it was Martin who shouldered the load on Tuesday, scoring 15 of Wagner's 30 first-half points and totaling 24 on the game.

"He banged some threes, so we had him going right and then he started getting in the lane," Smith said. "We tried about four different guys on him, and he still gave us fits."

Martin cut the deficit to six with less than four minutes to play, but the Lions' lead would last until halftime, when they held a 36-30 advantage.

Agho, who doled out eight assists on Saturday, was back at it again early on Tuesday. Almost every time he had the ball, he would drive to draw defenders and dish to an open teammate, resulting in six first-half assists and eight for the game.

"Noruwa is a phenomenal player and he draws a ton of attention, which makes



JASPER L. CLYATT / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

LEADING MAN | Light Blue star Noruwa Agho finished the first half of last night's game with 6 points, 6 assists and 5 rebounds and ended the game with 11 points total.

it a lot easier for us, because he can just drive and kick out," forward John Daniels said.

With Agho on the court for the first half of the second period, the Lions increased their lead to as much as 14. But each time they extended the advantage to double digits, Wagner would respond with a bucket.

When the lead did reach 14, Martin sank a three, and Agho went to the bench with his third foul shortly thereafter. A pair of layups drew the Seahawks within seven, at which point Smith brought Agho back in.

"The youngs kind of went in there tentatively, and they [Wagner] got a little momentum," Smith said. "I was trying to play through it, and it got too close."

Agho's return was short-lived. He drew an offensive foul on his first possession, and it seemed things would unravel from there.

The Lions committed four turnovers in two minutes, and a Martin jumper at

the 6:57 mark made it a five-point game.

Agho re-entered moments later, and the Lions regained their footing by pushing the lead back to nine. But the Seahawks would not go away, and the rest of the game saw the Light Blue lead fluctuate between three and nine.

"We were having a tough time keeping them in front of us," Smith said. "They went small and we finally made the adjustment to put John Daniels and Asenso [Ampim] in there so we can guard all the perimeter people."

Ampim and Daniels made their biggest contributions on the glass, where they tallied 17 rebounds, just two short of Wagner's team total. They also both came through with free throws late in the game to halt the Seahawks' rally, part of a stretch where the Light Blue made 10 of 12 as a team to end the game.

The win maintained the Lions' perfect record at home this season, a mark that will be tested this Saturday against Bryant.

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