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# the eye

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## WALL STREET INDISCREET

ONE STUDENT DISSECTS GORDON GEKKO





# the eye

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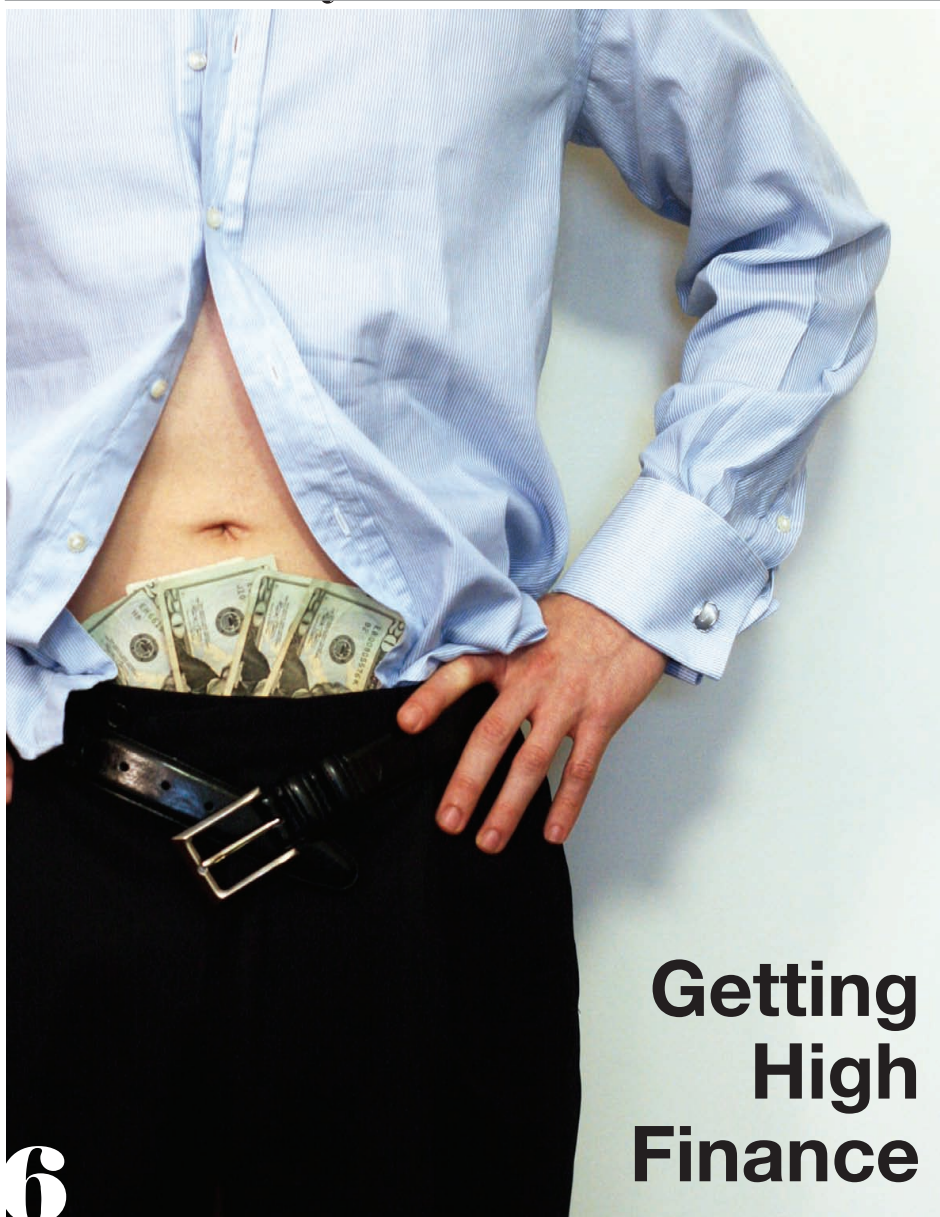
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## Cover Story



## Urbanities



### Indulging in the Future?

A Columbia study reveals that at a 40th reunion, both hardcore partyers and studiers wished they could have switched places in college.



### Not Your Average Graduate

Columbia alumnus Josh Arthur, CC '04, exchanged Low Steps for Baghdad. Read his latest dispatch from the war zone.

## From the Editor...

Following the *Daily News*' "exposé" on Columbia's "playpen for sexual hijinks," Ann Coulter told Fox News in late November that the students whose privacy was invaded were "probably not lookers."

I am an avowed supporter of Coulter—not that she'd ever accept my crypto-Jewish sympathy. When she declares that Columbia, as a microcosm of liberal culture, is "coarsening the culture and trying to make all of us like, you know, one step above the heifers," I listen.

In a June editorial, the *LA Times* scribe Meghan Daum defended Ann Coulter as a satirist in the tradition of Jonathan Swift. It was in 1729 that Swift prescribed eating impoverished babies to combat overpopulation, only to be attacked with the voracity of a bereaved Jersey widow. Though, to my knowledge, no babies were eaten to this effect, Swift has since been vindicated.

I get Ann. When *The Eye* ran its holiday supplement last semester, Bwog readers accused the magazine of "chutzpah"—and outright snobbery. One anonymous post dribbled, too faint for punctuation, "like students can really

afford a \$1300 scarf from Bergdorfs."

In anticipation of animated online debate, we've programmed this inaugural *Eye* with an interview with video artist Laurel Nakadate (page 3), noted for her playful, fetishistic visions of sexuality. Yet in the same issue, we feature a poignant portrait of a Columbia alumnus serving deep in the trenches of Baghdad (page 5).

An extreme subscriber to the "satirist" hypothesis might assume that Coulter lampoons the Christian right. That's not right—she admires no-nonsense rhetoricians far too much. A loyal Swiftian, Coulter takes issue with political correctness and the hypocrisy it engenders. As a charismatic, lunatic cartoon, she nullifies the pandering inaction of PC politics.

No institution is excepted, and for Coulter, Columbia is yet another monolith, an idol to topple. What guidebook doesn't dutifully mention New York sociability and work ethic, or remind you that your hand will not be held?

No one sent me the Wall Street memo as I was applying. Yet each year we send scores of juniors into the howling

winds of the finance district. Senior writer Dan Haley investigates the culture of Gordon Geckko (page 7) beyond the lurid details (though lurid they are, in detail—as photographed by Dani Zalcman) and discovers a set of self-conscious students in search of independence. One Columbia professor might call the process "hyperopia" (page 4).

For those of you unaware, this issue inaugurates an entirely new *Eye* staff. With it comes a Robin Yang-designed re-launch, at [eye.columbiaspectator.com](http://eye.columbiaspectator.com). Lest I forget, *The Eye*'s managing editor, Sadia Latifi, has been essential to the re-conceptualization, and even Coulter has anointed her a "looker."

If to this point my Coulter theme has proven forced, allow me to conclude. It is our duty to eschew politesse and provide you with a no-holds-barred portrait of student life at Columbia. The staff, Sadia, and I welcome you to our lifestyles and to a new year of *The Eye*.

## A&E



**The Year's Best**  
*Children ruled*  
Hollywood in 2006

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A salon especially for girls with curls

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Columbia takes Sundance by storm

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Citrus—not just for cough drops



## INTERVIEW

By Sara Davis

# Whose Mid-Life Crisis Is She?



When I saw **Laurel Nakadate's** video art for the first time, I was most struck by a segment where she stands alone in a room, wearing a naughty French maid outfit and a defiant expression. A dog rushes into the frame and begins enthusiastically humping her leg. The scene was entirely fascinating. Since her first video installation, "I Wanna Be Your Mid-life Crisis" at Daniel Silverstein Gallery in 2002, Nakadate has steadily made a name for herself in the nebulous world of video art, most prominently romancing lonely middle-aged male strangers on-screen. This autumn, her efforts have shown at Danziger Projects, Mary Boone Gallery, and the Asia Society. The spring finds her with exhibitions in Australia, Boston, and at the IFC here in New York. When I caught up with Nakadate in November, she had harsh words for "feminist" name-callers and some prescient thoughts on Britney Spears.

### Have you been recognized on the street from your videos?

Yeah, more than I would think... Recently, this man came up to me and decided that because he recognized me he got to have a free-for-all discussion, so, in the middle of my day, I got to defend my work on the spot.

### Was he being mean about it?

He was being very confrontational about the nature of my work and my working method. Discussions like that are engaging, but there's a time and place for them and I don't feel like I ever need to defend why I work. I was happy to talk to him. I just felt like he wanted to start a fight with someone, and I happened to be that person.

### Was he by any chance an older single man?

The best part was that he totally could have been in one of my videos! Maybe he was reacting to something he felt about himself and maybe recognizing elements of his own loneliness or insecurities in my video.

Since you put yourself in awkward situations in your work, are you better equipped to deal with real life awkward situations?

It's funny, you know, it's gotten to the point where I just observe it, and maybe that's because of how I make my work. I've noticed recently that I am a little bit less responsive to really horrible, awkward things than other people.

I was noticing that in the Mary Boone gallery, your video is on sale for \$4,800. That struck me as kind of odd. I couldn't imagine that someone would buy an eight-minute DVD for \$4,800 and then, say, watch it in their den.

It doesn't strike me as odd in that someone would buy a photograph for \$4,800 or a painting or a sculpture.

I guess it just never occurred to me that you could bring video art into the home.

A lot of collectors take it really seriously. I can understand that people would think it odd when you can watch videos for free all day long on YouTube, but there's a difference between video art and YouTube.

I'm surprised at how serious you are. For some reason I keep thinking about the Paris Hilton song in your video, and, not that you don't seem fun-loving, but I was just picturing someone who listens to Paris Hilton...

No, I mean the songs that I choose to put in my videos are songs that I really respond to! I think interviews are a really strange thing because when I make the kind of work that I make, I need to be really serious in interviews to show that I'm serious about my work, and it's not disposable or dismissable. There's already enough suspicion about whether video art is credible, whether girlishness in art is credible, etc., that in some ways, I have to be on my best behavior when I'm talking about my work.

But at the same time, Paris Hilton's songs are pretty amazing. I used to use Britney Spears a lot in my early work. I thought, here's this girl who is making incredibly complicated—at the time—pop music, and so many people are getting off on her in different ways.

### Like?

Like, girls are getting off on her because she has the perfect body. She's the perfect southern blond girl. Guys are getting off on her because she epitomizes this fetish. For conservatives, she fuels their arguments about moral decay, and liberals are getting off on her because she's doing whatever she wants. So I was interested in her as a sort of phenomenon and would like to think that my work pushes buttons with certain people in the same sort of way. So maybe I see Britney as sort of a mentor.

It's probably good to move on to Paris Hilton because Britney Spears is sort of deteriorating.



She's a tragic figure! She really fell from grace. But she's getting ready for a comeback. I read that she already lost 30 pounds after her baby was born, and she's getting ready to go blond again. Everyone loves a comeback, so I think that people will accept her.

If you walked into a gallery and saw your work, not knowing anything about it, what would you think?

I would be interested, but I would wonder about the artist personally. But I guess I see my art as mini-performances, not as "me." Like, an actress in a movie would never get called many of the things I've been called, since she's playing a role...

### What sort of things have you been called?

You can find many people hanging out in their pajamas saying mean and vicious things about people in the art world, and my theory is that they've got too much time on their hands. What I really love is when women who claim to be feminists badmouth girls for making art that seems girlish.

### That seems like such a waste of energy.

Personally, I think they'd be better off getting dressed and going to work.

### Why do you think they don't get dressed?

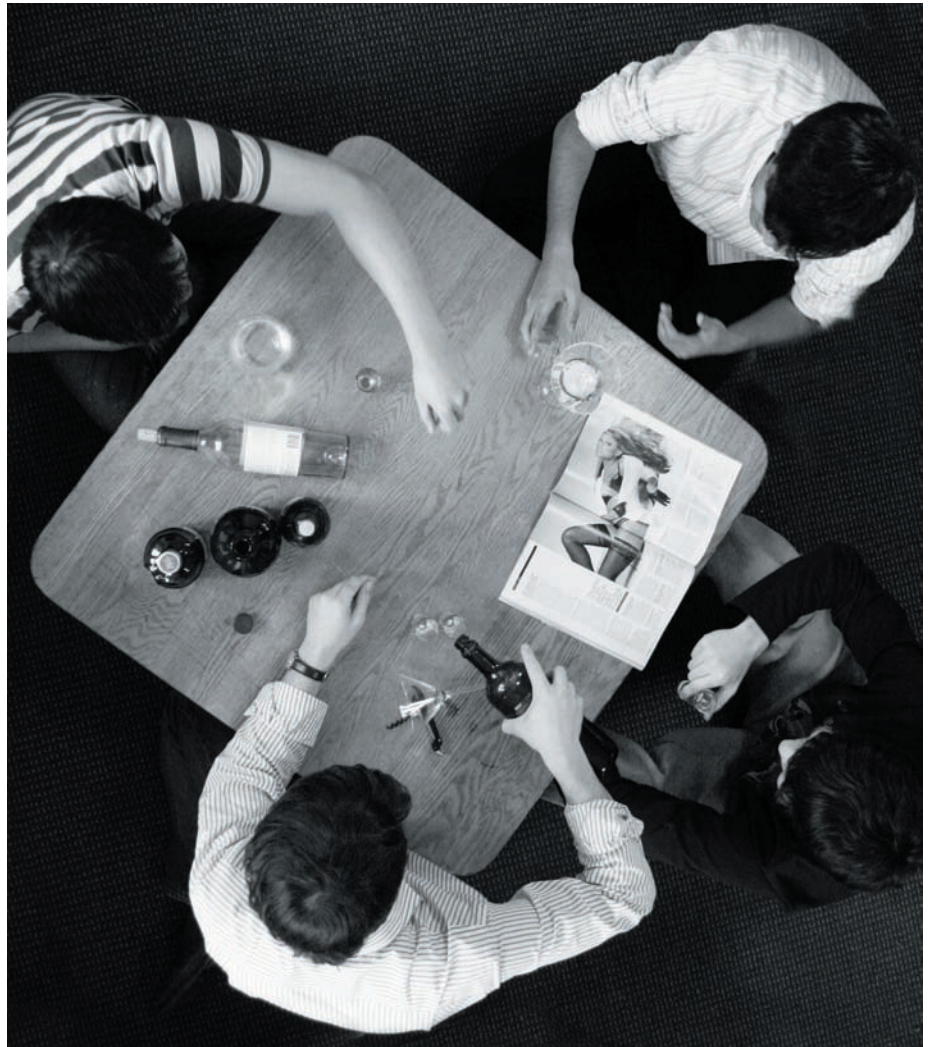
I recently found a Web page where these women were saying that because I make all this work where I go find men on the street and make videos with them, I'm a slut. Can you really, in this day and age, call other women sluts for making work about... anything?

So, I keep reading, and the one girl's like, "What are you doing today?" and the other girl's like, "Oh, I'm still in my pajamas," and meanwhile on the Web blog, it's like 2 p.m.!

So, clearly you need to leave the house and make something of your own. ■



# urbanities



PHOTOS BY DANIELLA ZALCMAN

## Born to Party, Willing to Work?

Columbia Professor Takes a Closer Look at the Regrets of College Students

BY ISABEL BOHRER

**W**hile their most well known collaboration undoubtedly remains the United States' Declaration of Independence, both Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson also actively opposed procrastination, and their proverb "Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today" continues to resonate today.

Parents endeavor to prevent their children from putting off chores, as educators insist that students not delay their homework, and as corporate executives repeatedly encourage employees to complete tasks ahead of time: everyone is trying to get things done, and the secret of getting ahead is getting started.

"Hyperopia" has long been a synonym for a defect of vision, colloquially known as farsightedness. But this past year, the term took on another dimension when Columbia Business School professor Ran Kivetz first used it metaphorically to mean "excessive farsightedness." As part of his research on economic consumer models at the Columbia Business School Behavioral Research Lab, Kivetz and doctoral candidate Anat Keinan recently published a study in the *Journal of Consumer Research* examining the "regrets of college students regarding their behavior during a past winter break."

More specifically, Kivetz asked 69 Columbia students whether they were happy or regretful about having spent more time working or enjoying themselves during their winter break. The answers in favor of working versus partying were just about equally distributed. However, when Kivetz interviewed 24 alumni at their 40-year reunion event, those who missed out on the social events during their undergraduate years regretted it, and those who indulged look back on the fun with ease and satisfaction. According to Kivetz, "supposedly farsighted—'hyperopic'—choices of virtue over vice evoke increasing regret over time."

But who says that working equals virtue and partying equals vice? If there's one thing we're taught at Columbia, it is to question. So let's take a look at what some of our inquisitive alumni might have to answer.

Reflecting on his time at Columbia, John Weaver, CC '49, an English and psychology major who subsequently went into producing and directing commercials, finds the virtue versus vice dichotomy highly inappropriate: "placing 'work' and 'partying' at the opposite ends of any attempt at evaluating the College experience seems myopic—to maintain a continuum of the optic metaphor—and of little value." For Weaver, it is clear that there is more to Columbia than just a lot of papers or parties.

Stuart Berkman, CC '66, expresses a similar concern for the work versus party polarity. Berkman, who worked at the Coca-Cola Company for almost 30 years, considers himself "to have been neither 'hard-working' nor a 'party-goer'." There are many other alternative pursuits in which Columbia students may have engaged, such as campus extracurricular activities, paid employment, cultural endeavors, or simply 'majoring' in New York!

Columbia prides itself in offering more than merely a rigorous academic program or a great environment for festivities. The University's 2005 brochure introduces New York's acropolis by stating that "now, more than ever, Columbia University in the City of New York is a place where 'the best of all worlds' is everyday life." And the best of everyday life emerges by striking a healthy medium between hyperopia and myopia, looking out for the future and at the same time, enjoying the present.

Life at Columbia is about the interactions you have with fellow students, floor mates, professors and staff, day by day. Leah Germer, CC '09, recognizes that "going out—concerts, food, friends, New York—in general is tough to balance against the workload," but not impossible. Because in the long-run, the quality time spent with friends will leave you with memories that no chapter of the *Iliad* can replace.

Ultimately, the way in which you choose to spend your time is, of course, up to you. While some may choose to follow in the proverbial footsteps of Franklin and Jefferson, the lovers of procrastination will agree with Mark Twain and "Never put off till tomorrow, what you can do the day after tomorrow."





PHOTO COURTESY JOSH ARTHUR

# Columbia's Warrior

## CC '04 Grad Goes to Iraq

BY MATT MIRELES

**A**s the sun sets over Manhattan, it rises over Iraq and the head of one of Columbia's own: First Lieutenant Josh Arthur, CC '04. He is an infantry officer. And he is in Iraq.

Most days are routine, really—another patrol around western Baghdad, maybe some paperwork for the higher ups, and of course, seeing to the needs of his men. Yes, they are his men. He leads a platoon of a few dozen soldiers—grunts, really—and he is responsible for their lives. He has to make sure that they don't die, that they kill when they have to, but not when they don't—if they fly off the handle and start massacring people, that's his ass. He must care for them like children yet be ready to send them off to their death—into the dark house, into the fire fight, into danger. And when they die, he must soldier on. No stopping to cry or to reflect, no feeling sorry for himself. And no giving in to the yearning revenge, for blood, for misdirected hate.

He walks a fine line.

No more jogs around Central Park, no more calisthenics at Lincoln Center. No more training sessions and lectures. No more CC. No more rhapsodizing on the meaning of life and death from a dorm room. No, this is it. ROTC is over and done with. This is war—and he's in it.

Over the next several months, Columbia College alumnus Josh Arthur, now of the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division, will be filing reports for *The Eye* from Forward Operating Base Liberty, a fortified encampment near the Baghdad Airport. His work will be edited for space, but we will pull no punches. He is a soldier writing about war. His images and his thoughts will be here on these pages for you to see. Period.

### How did you get this crazy idea in your head to join the Army?

In the fall of my sophomore year, I started to really think about what I wanted to do after college. Until then, I'd sort of been leaning toward hoping to get into constitutional law, believe it or not. I still find it interesting, although I'm horribly undereducated on the subject—President Bolinger's First Amendment class notwithstanding, of course. But then some interesting things happened. I realized, for one, that I wanted to study international relations, and I realized I wanted to do something pertaining to the field. I watched the movie *Spy Game* and thought, "Hey, you know, that CIA—that wouldn't be a bad route." As I thought more about it, the notion came to me that maybe I could get into

military intelligence somehow and perhaps use that as a stepping stone to get into the CIA after a few years in the Army. But then I looked at things a little more honestly, and I realized as I started to think about joining the military that what I really wanted to do—no matter what occupation I held—was do something that would make me proud. And it dawned on me that, in fact, being an Army officer itself was the one thing I could think of that would make me more proud than anything else I could do. I wrote a ROTC recruiter with a very curious mind, and the more I was exposed to the program (at St. John's University) the more I came to understand that this was really what I wanted to do. And

then the more I thought about actually being an Army officer, the more I came to accept that I didn't really want to be in military intelligence. The "purpose" of an Army officer, insofar as I could ascribe one to the whole profession, was to lead soldiers in combat. I knew that if I were going to join the Army, it would have to be in that role. It just seemed foreign to me to be "in the Army" and not be part of the warfighting group. So to hell with military intelligence, I thought; for me it had to be Infantry or Armor.

### Do you feel yourself changing—mentally, emotionally, physically—since graduating from Columbia?

Columbia was an unusual place for me. You read testimony, here and there, about how Columbia has helped students discover themselves, etc. Columbia didn't do that to me, exactly, although perhaps in a way it did by exposing me to so many different people from so many different backgrounds, Columbia, perhaps ironically, convinced me that I was proud of who I was already, that I was glad I had the values I did, the upbringing I did, the world view that I did. I'm still thankful to have met so many very interesting people there, understand?

But I arrived, and it seemed to me that I saw so many people to whom this part of their life was somehow expected, like it was part of a somewhat charted course to wherever. So many people seemed simply to expect that they would go to Columbia, just as afterward they expected to get their MBA or M.D. or Ph.D. or whatever it was they wanted to do. I'm not saying everyone did—I have friends that did those very things, although I don't think what I'm saying applies to them. But I looked around, I saw all of these people, and so many of them, it seemed to me, were simply ungrateful for what they had. I found it supremely ironic that I, son of an upper-middle-class WASP family whose parents had worked hard to be able to send me to a place like Columbia, was the one who looked back and was thankful for all I'd had growing up!

I was probably surrounded by plenty of classmates with chalets here and there, exotic cars, life experiences I couldn't imagine—and I was somehow glad that I didn't have that. I was proud to say my father had served in the Army, had served in Vietnam. I was awfully grateful to have succeeded and to have somehow found a way into a school—a place—like Columbia. And I thought it strange that I—when surrounded by so many people who probably had much more to be grateful for than I did—should feel compelled to give back somehow, to serve. But I did. ■

# Letters From Baghdad

## Our First Dispatch From The Front Line

Nov. 25, 2006

Find Baghdad International Airport on a map, and my unit is in the first built-up areas just to the east and northeast. The area is almost exclusively Sunni. It was once somewhat more mixed, with perhaps as much as 30 percent of the population being Shia. But as a result of the recent sectarian violence you've probably heard about, Shias are either leaving the neighborhood voluntarily or departing this world very involuntarily. The stories in the media of sectarian violence are absolutely true, and they probably aren't overstated.

By far the most common situation we respond to is the discovery of dead bodies in our area. I've already come upon three—two had been bound and/or blindfolded and the third had been the victim of an alleged drive-by shooting. Nearly all of the bodies are Shia and most show evidence of having been killed execution-style, with gunshots to the back of the head and neck.

It's generally about as gruesome as it sounds—thank goodness we've been spared the spate of beheadings that ravaged the area not long before our arrival. But the manner of death isn't as important as the motive, which in almost all cases is reprisal and intimidation, as best we can tell.

Bodies are left in conspicuous areas—in open fields near mosques, on heavily trafficked corners, or simply in sites that are known as places to expect to find bodies. Sometimes they're there simply as a show of force or power; other times they're acts of revenge for incidents perpetrated by the other sect. It's human tragedy of a senseless and—to most of us—a basically incomprehensible kind.

Until next time,

Lieutenant Josh Arthur

### STAY TUNED

Keep watch for the next week's dispatch from Baghdad.

### SIGN ON

For a full interview with Lieutenant Josh Arthur, visit *The Eye's* re-launched Web site at eye.columbiaspectator.com.





# style



**S**moking bunnies, stoned teddy bears, and dopey frosted donuts are only some of the corrupted innocents found in the twisted, satirical collections of Kidrobot. Founded in 2002 by designer Paul Budnitz, Kidrobot does not sell, as the name might suggest, electronic toys for minors. Instead it features limited-edition street art, collectible toys, and apparel.

Still not interested? The “toys” are designed by artists and graffiti writers including Michael Lau, Frank Kozik, and Tristan Eaton, and have even included collaborations with New York fashion designer Keanan Duffty. These precious objects range in price from \$4 to \$400, with ample room for value appreciation. The pieces are produced in limited quantity—some less than 500—and are fast becoming collector’s items.

One of our favorites is the Gloomy Bloody Bear, created by famed Japanese artist Mori Chack. In keeping with Kidrobot’s morbid aesthetic, the tiny

pink figure is covered in subtle blood splatters. Aggressive, cute, and strangely intimidating and dark, Kidrobot art is peculiar and entirely better for it.

Embrace your inner child while saying adios to your naive adolescent toys. Kidrobot products can be found at its store on 126 Prince St. in SoHo, at Barneys New York, or online at [www.kidrobot.com](http://www.kidrobot.com). Gloomy bear, \$16.95.

With gold and silver gliding down recent runways in the form of metal-plated armor or floor-sweeping aluminum gowns, the term “going for gold” has never seemed more appropriate. But how can you bring a bit of shine and shimmer to a tiny Columbia double?

Target, which recently brought us chic jeans from Paul & Joe designer Sophie Albou and will soon launch resort wear from Jack McCullough and Lazaro Hernandez of Proenza Schouler, might just have the answer. Since 2002, former couture designer Todd Oldham has designed chic items for the megastore, and met the budgets of countless college students.

Among all the technicolor and functional pieces that Oldham designs, one item stands out from the rest: a round vase with a mirrored mosaic surface that looks and sparkles just like a disco ball, but without the messy electrical wires and holes in your ceiling. Oldham also adds a special kick with an electric orange interior.

The vase, accompanied by flowers, can be given as a gift to a stylish friend, making his or her room bling more than a pair of grills from Paul Wall. Or, if you ever feel the urge to groove, try filling the larger vase with candles, turning off the lights, and dancing the night away to Prince, ABBA, and Diana Ross as homage to the vase’s Studio 54 roots—without the Schedule 1 substances and sensationalism, of course. ■

Vase, small, \$39.99; large, \$59.99. Available at [www.target.com](http://www.target.com).

## No Stress for the Curly Tress

Frizzy-headed girls, rejoice! Devachan Salon works out your hair’s kinks.

BY EMILY STEINBERGER

**A**fter a long and congested drive downtown, the first thing I noticed at Devachan Salon was the group of three women behind the counter. The beautiful heads of black, red, and blond curls proved an auspicious sign for what was to be my first experience at this salon for the curly-haired.

Located in the trendy but often overbearing environs of SoHo, the salon’s unique interior is the perfect match for its neighborhood. Set in the basement of 560 Broadway, Devachan is a spacious white room, divided into sections by white mesh that hangs from the ceiling, pulled tight for both energy and ambience. Passing up quiet elegance for a hip vibe, the din of Devachan’s countless clients led me to wonder just what about the technique kept these girls coming back for more.

Prior to my visit, I had been a devoted follower of Ouidad, another New York salon specializing in curly hair. The Ouidad method includes a time-consuming process and lots of gel to create a highly-stylized head of curls, so I was pleasantly surprised when the only product the stylist at Devachan added to my hair was a leave-in conditioner.

The cut is made on dry hair, pre-wash. Each curl is separated and cut on its own to define every strand and enhance body. The wash is strategized as well. Devachan has a strict no-shampoo philosophy, preferring instead to use cleanser only every five to seven days. The products embody their goal of healthy and hydrated hair, and they left my hair feeling wonderfully smooth. Whereas many

from the curly-haired set focus on eliminating frizz, aiming for a controlled and styled head of curls that instead often results in flat, stiff, over-gelled hair, the Devachan look is more natural and free-flowing.

After the wash, the stylist directed me in healthy ways of managing my curly hair, including which products to use and how to apply them. He even offered that if

ever in the area, I should feel free to stop by or call anytime with any questions I may have!

I left with a bag full of well-priced products (a cleanser called No-Poo, conditioner called One Condition, after-shower conditioner called B’Leave-In, gel for sporadic use called AnGell, and Mist-er Right, a revitalizing spray for limp and damaged curls), and reemerged from the basement with soft and lush curls and an official Devachan conversion. ■





Article by Dan Haley

Photos by Daniella Zalcmán



# THE SECRET LIVES OF i-BANKERS

**I**-bankers don't call it "i-banking." Roughly 20 minutes into our interview, that's what Paul Owen told me. I had been excited to interview Owen, CC '07, a campus celebrity and well-known partyer. Even before signing his \$145,000 deal with a major bulge bracket investment bank, Owen was living a life most others could only envy: a member of one of the "athlete" frats (though not an athlete himself) and, if Facebook photos are to be trusted, the recipient of no small amount of attention from females.

I thought I was playing it cool by calling Owen's industry "i-banking." I thought I was showing Owen what an insider I was.

"No one in the investment banking industry calls it 'i-banking,'" he snapped. "I mean, it's not a fucking Apple accessory."

Owen, by the way, is not really named Paul Owen. He was not comfortable using his real name for this interview; the pseudonym, however, was all his own. Paul Owen is the name of the fictional investment banker that Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho*, Patrick Bateman, murders for having an apartment better than his own.

Senior year has treated Owen well. Upon completing his internship following junior year, Owen was

offered an employment contract with the firm he had been working for worth approximately \$145,000. This firm is one of the elite bulge bracket investment banks, meaning it is one of the largest and most profitable in the world of finance.

Locking up employment from an internship before graduating college is not uncommon—it is also crucial to breaking into the industry, emphasized Eleanor Coufos, associate director of planning and admissions at the Center for Career Education. Often, the junior internship, which occurs over the summer between junior and senior year, will lead directly to a job as an analyst at the firm. An analyst is an entry level employee that works long hours analyzing and compiling data for senior members of the bank to use in deals.

"Employers favor students with internship experience, as those students have demonstrated a commitment to the industry," Coufos said. "It is becoming quite common in finance for employers to offer a significant number of their full-time offers through their internship program."

Owen, however, is set. He belongs to a select group of seniors who know beyond a shadow of a doubt that they will emerge from college not only financially independent, but wealthy.

At Columbia, the yield rate for the financially secure is higher than at most schools, both because of its location in the city and the desire for a heavily Ivy-employed industry to stay that way. In a survey conducted by CCE of the class of 2006 and completed by almost 50 percent of the class, 29 percent of students from Columbia College and 31 percent of SEAS students said they were going into finance after graduation. The consistent increase





in profit margins for firms like Goldman Sachs has sustained interest in a secure industry—and the interest shows no signs of stopping. According to a Sept. 11 article in the *Spectator*, CCE's 'Super Saturday' event last semester, which brings prospective interns together with current employees in the industry, drew around 400 students, nearly double from the previous year.

The majority of students who find employment in investment banks come from Ivy League-caliber schools. In the banking industry, these are referred to as "target" schools. Columbia is one. So is Cornell—but less so. Middlebury is not a target school. Don't even think about Binghamton. In this sense, even the top law schools and medical schools in the nation cannot compete with the investment banks in terms of their students' pure Ivy pedigree.

Many students come to Columbia with little knowledge of the industry, but this targeted recruitment and the guarantee of a secure, affluent lifestyle has swayed many. These students are willing to do whatever it takes to fit the profile—even if it means changing their wardrobe, their attitude, and their former aspirations.

With \$145,000 in his pocket—projected earnings, it is not all actually in his pocket at the moment—Owen tells me that senior year has been "an absolute shitshow."

"The best description of it I can give," said Owen, "is that the third week of school I took Monday and Tuesday off from class to go to Puerto Rico."

Of course, Owen's current success was far from guaranteed. As an American Studies major, Owen's education hardly geared him to practical matters of finance. Owen admits that he is "not much of a numbers guy" and "more of a writer."

The beginning of junior year marked a turning point for Owen. College was more than halfway over. He realized that the choices he would make might hugely impact his eventual career and, indeed, his standard of living. He reasoned that there would be two groups of people coming out of Columbia: those who would be making money and those who wouldn't. Many of the future moneymakers were those pursuing careers in investment banking.

Owen noticed a trend among high-achieving students: student council members, athletes, valedictorians. "I looked around and I felt like the best people, the brightest minds, the most ambitious people at Columbia were going into banking," said Owen. "I'm a really competitive person, and that was a huge motivation."

Another huge motivation was the money, or, "exit opportunities." Exit opportunities refer to the options a banker has after their initial two-year contract expires. And with the money accumulated during those two years and the skills developed, there

will be a lot of opportunities.

"The appeal of this field is that after two years, I can do pretty much whatever I want," said Owen. "I can move to France and become a painter, or join a private equity firm, or go surfing in Australia. It's not just the money. Well, it is the money. But it's also the freedom the money affords."

It's the prospect of exit opportunities, the prospect of trading two years or five years or 10 years of one's life for the ability to pursue one's "real dreams" in relative financial comfort, that makes investment banking so appealing. The i-banker doesn't need be a corporate drone his whole life; if he so chooses he can retire at 30 and live in a designer apartment in the Village.

Though the exit opportunities are certainly attractive, Owen confesses that he's taken to the i-banker lifestyle. He reports he just might stick with finance and rise through the ranks at his firm, cashing in more and more with each promotion.

"At first, as an analyst, you're doing grunt work," he said. "But then, as you go on, as you get to the vice president and managing director levels, it's all about client relations. Expensive dinners, golf trips, schmoozing. I can't say I would mind that at all."

Okay, so Owen wanted a career in finance. But would an American studies major lack the necessary skills for the job? Not so, according to Owen.

"Investment banking isn't this advanced math, these advanced quantitative techniques. There's Excel for that," he tells me. "Investment banking is really just critical thinking. They way I put it, if you're good at Sudoku, you'll be a good investment banker."

CCE's Coufos agrees.

"It is a myth that economics majors are suited to finance firms," said Coufos. "Rather, firms are interested in hiring across all majors. A common denominator among Columbia students are their ability to think, read, and write critically—a skill set praised by all employers."

Walking into the first of his first-round interviews, Owen was armed with little more than his ability to "think critically." Out of more than 40 applications, Owen only netted four first-round interviews. The first interview mattered; in fact, this interview was with the most prestigious of the four firms that had tapped him. Owen walked in confident, but not cocky. He tried to remember that the guy sitting across from him was making at least \$600,000 a year; he was a man who could buy and sell him. Then, he tried to forget about it. A thought like that could make a man nervous.

Owen came armed with all the knowledge of finance he could glean from his *Vault Guide to Top Internships*, the authoritative manual for moving up in the in-

"I LOOKED AROUND AND I FELT LIKE THE BEST PEOPLE, THE BRIGHTEST MINDS, THE MOST AMBITIOUS PEOPLE AT COLUMBIA WERE GOING INTO BANKING."



dustry. Though Owen had read all 408 pages of it, this American Studies major understandably felt he was at a disadvantage compared with his economics-majoring, intern-experienced peers. Owen shook hands with his stone-faced interviewer, settled into a seat across the table, and steeled himself for what could have been a massacre of an interview.

Within minutes, upon relating his background, Owen learned that his interviewer was a Los Angeles native, like he was. Owen decided to take a gamble and see if the man was a Lakers fan. He was.

Owen had chanced upon a fellow Lakers fan the day after Kobe Bryant had scored 81 points in a game. Kobe kept them occupied for the first 20 minutes of the 30-minute interview. Owen later received notification that he had made it to round two in the interview process.

Of course, not everyone just falls into a great banking internship by way of bluffing and basketball. Take, for example, David Chan, CC '08. From an early age, Chan knew he wanted to study economics. Like Owen, Chan also decided to assume a pseudonym for this article. He studied economics extensively in high school and entered Columbia thinking he would earn a Ph.D. in the subject. Yet Chan, after little over a year at Columbia, also found himself enamored of the “exit opportunities” banking offers. He was a sophomore Economics-Mathematics major with a 3.8 GPA when he applied to a bulge bracket investment banking firm for a summer internship in their Asia-Pacific offices. Chan got the job, a Hong Kong internship usually reserved for juniors.

The perks for an intern who chooses to spend the summer in Hong Kong are impossible to ignore. Over the course of a summer, banking interns make a set amount of money, usually between \$10,000 and \$12,000 for 10 weeks of work. This might seem like a lot, but it amounts to even more in Asia, especially since some firms put their employees up in posh hotels, gratis. The perks don't stop there—interns working in the Asia-Pacific offices also get their own secretaries.

“I was 21 and my secretary was about 15 years older,” Chan said. “I could ask her to fax stuff for me, or get me coffee, or pens, or even ask her to bring me my bank account statement.”

Even with a secretary, the workload proved intense. In any investment banking internship, the intern will take on the duties of a full-time analyst for the summer. These duties will often keep the intern in the office late into the night and sometimes straight through into the next day. There was a three-week stretch when Chan was only able to get three hours of sleep a night, weekends excluded. Chan's boss told him that people only need four hours to function normally.

Chan remembers his third day on the job as one of the most taxing. Upon arriving at work at 9:00 a.m., Chan was put onto a deal by one of the vice presidents, which meant that he had to compile data for a client meeting that was to take place the following day. He began working on this project immediately and because of its pressing nature, opted to skip lunch and a training session that he was supposed to attend. Fueled by a breakfast of fruit and toast, Chan worked without pause until

“WHEN YOU'RE WORKING 80 HOURS A WEEK, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO WANT TO CHILL OUT WITH A JOINT WHEN YOU GO OUT. YOU'RE GOING TO DO SOME BUMPS.”

nearly 3:00 p.m., when he was approached by another VP. This VP had an even more important and pressing deal in the works and told Chan to stop what he was doing and begin working on the new deal. Along with another intern, Chan worked on this deal all the way from 3 p.m. to 7 a.m. the following morning. He took a one-hour break for dinner. After such a brutal shift, one would expect an employee to be able to score some sack time, maybe four or five hours until he had to get back to work. Not so for Chan. Chan had to go to a client presentation the next morning in mainland China. So at 7 a.m., after he was done compiling the data for the deal he had been working on, he took a company limo back to his hotel. He showered, dried himself off, pounded a Red Bull and went back into the limo. It wasn't even 8 a.m. yet. The limo then picked up his associates and teammates and they headed down to the client meeting for the rest of the day. At the meeting, Chan had to stay alert and take notes. He gulped a lot of coffee.

Of course, it wasn't all work in Hong Kong. On Friday and Saturday nights, with no work the next day, the bankers would cut loose. This meant hitting up one of the three big expatriate bars/clubs in the city. These clubs were usually filled with two groups of people: bankers and “models.” The “models” would get in without paying the cover charge and drink for free while the bankers would have to cough up \$1,000 for a table, although sometimes the firm paid for them.

“A firm might book an entire club for a night, for a welcoming or departure party,” Chan said. And, of course, some “models” might just happen to find their way into the party.

When I asked Chan about the drug scene in Hong Kong, he said that the interns would occasionally go out on a yacht and cruise around and smoke marijuana. Chan insisted he had not seen anyone using cocaine.

Not so for Paul Owen. When I asked Owen what was the most prevalent drug among investment bankers, he gave a little laugh. Then, when he realized the seri-



ousness of the question, his smile constricted. “Well, I mean, when you're working 14 hours a day, when you're working 80 hours a week, you're not going to want to chill out with a joint when you go out. You're going to do some bumps.”

Over the summer, whenever Owen would get out of work before 1:00 a.m. (which happened, according to Owen, not at all frequently enough), he would have his waiting town car—a standard investment banking perk if you work late nights—take him not home but to a bar, where he would meet up with friends from work and school.

“There were people who didn't drink at all and came out just to keep up appearances,” said Owen. “And then there were people who would be downing tons of Macallan and Glenlivet and sneaking off to the bathroom for a bump—or 12.”

Owen paused for a second and then said, “I would definitely fall closer to the latter in my personal inclinations.”

Though Owen aspired to more economical spending habits, he occasionally found himself on the receiving end of a \$200 bar tab. Owen's spending, however, paled in comparison to that of one of his fellow analysts, who managed to blow \$800 on lap dances at the Flashdancers Club in one night.

Owen would always try to make it home by 2:30 a.m., but more often than not he would roll back up to Columbia around 4:00 a.m. Owen would crawl into bed, set his alarm for 7:40 a.m. and catch a few needed hours of rest. He'd wake up to his alarm and then actually get out of bed around 8:20 a.m. He'd pound a Red Bull and make it downtown to the office by 9 a.m., ready to start the process again.

Chan and Owen both got into i-banking for the exit opportunities. Chan has voiced a desire to bring his i-banking skills to the nonprofit world, perhaps with some accumulated capital in tow from a two-year or five-year i-banking stint. Owen also savors the freedom only money can provide, not just in terms of career alternatives but also lifestyle. A self-proclaimed “guy who likes to buy his friends drinks,” Owen enjoys fine dining and expensive suits—he's planning on buying a \$3,000 Paul Smith when he gets his signing bonus. Investment banking is the only industry a student can enter directly out of college and have that be possible.

A recent Columbia alum, SEAS '06 (who also wished to remain anonymous) working as a first-year analyst in an investment bank put it this way:

“I was planning on going to law school,” he said. “I had interned at law firms and everything. But, then I started thinking about studying for the LSATs and being a student for another three years. ... My friends were all going into i-banking or consulting. I decided to give it a shot.”

Owen insisted that his interest in i-banking was sparked by the fact that the “brightest” and “best” people he knew were going into i-banking. Throughout elementary school, middle school, and high school, he had always been at the top of the class. But upon arriving at Columbia, the top becomes a little harder to gauge. Is the student novelist with the 3.2 to be included among the best? Is the Fulbright scholar living on grants and loans one of the best? Or is it the one with the most money to spend, the one working the longest hours?

Investment banks offer a clear solution to the student unsure of how to maintain his “elite” standing after college. But it also reads cynically into a society in which doctors and lawyers are defecting for paychecks. The desire for money and job security is reasonable, but is making six figures? ■

—Additional reporting by Laura Hedli





Horror fans may flock to *The Hitcher* starring Sophia Bush, but why the cheesy teen horror genre is alive after *Black Christmas* is a mystery. **OPENS FRIDAY**



In *The Italian*, a scrappy orphan flees his orphanage and misadventures ensue. Not to be confused with the awful Brad/Julia vehicle, *The Mexican*. **OPENS FRIDAY**



**CLOSER CLIVE OWEN STANDS DEFIANT IN SUPPORT OF FERTILITY IN ALFONSO CUARÓN'S CHILDREN OF MEN.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

## Children's Hope Carries Film in 2006

Teenage queens, super spies, pedophiles, and fauns unite to form the year's best in movies

BY DAVID EHRLICH

**C**riticism is a subjective business, but mediocrity affects us all equally. The smug production of adequacy has, over the course of our short lifetimes, become a livelihood for many (anyone involved with *Night at the Museum*) and an accepted burden for millions more (um, me). So as redundant and arbitrary as these annual lists are, anointing the bravest and most exciting works of a medium that is being driven into the ground is something of a public service. So without further ado, on with the superlatives and hyperbole!

**13 BRICK** – A bafflingly assured debut, Rian Johnson's teen noir is a relentlessly intriguing technical marvel. *Brick* promises a bit more than it eventually delivers, but Johnson has plenty of time to make it up to us.

**12 APOCALYPTO** – A man from a family that questions the Holocaust makes one of cinema's most poignant condemnations of widespread egocentricity—the irony tastes decidedly kosher. Fresh off his narratively-disastrous Christ porn, Mel Gibson is back with a fresh and visionary tale that is violent without being gratuitous and profound without stopping to catch its breath. Gibson translates genre clichés into fresh beats and ends his film on the perfect note. Besides, the man opened a film acted entirely in Mayan dialect atop the box office. I don't care how much he hates my people—that's brilliant.

**11 BABEL** – Alejandro González Iñárritu's last and most overtly flawed realization of a Guillermo Arriaga screenplay, the cogs of *Babel*'s international contraption don't grind as seamlessly as they should, but the Japan-set thread is—in its obvious way—the most immediately moving storytelling the now defunct duo have

ever crafted (in large part due to the performances of Rinko Kikuchi and Koji Yakusho).

**10 THE DEATH OF MR. LAZARESCU** – The first installment of Romanian filmmaker Cristi Puiu's planned series about suburban Bucharest, *Lazarescu* is a paradoxical real-time account of a dying man's final minutes. A nightmarish yet strangely optimistic odyssey from the eponymous Lazarescu's (the perfect Ion Fiscuteanu) bed to his final gurney and everywhere in between, Puiu's unflinching camera unearths humanity in our darkest shared inevitability.

**9 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE III / CASINO ROYALE** – Big-budget action extravaganzas done right, these two delights bit their thumb at convention and united teenage boys and flaming men in giddy glee. Both were note-perfect and thoughtfully crafted adventures that had enough wit, fun, and heart for their entire franchises.

**8 THE FOUNTAIN** – The Fountain is a film as much for the pores as it is for the mind. Like *Magnolia* or *Lost in Translation*, it sinks into your skin and becomes part of you after innumerable viewings on Starz. It's that movie that you contract in the theater and live with forever. As much as it sounds like cinematic herpes, Darren Aronofsky's lucid and erroneously assailed fever-dream of a third film is a revelatory experience, and, with any luck, a film that could outlast film itself.

**7 THE DEPARTED** – Time your Oscar pee-break for the Best Director category.

**6 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER / MARIE ANTOINETTE** – Two oddly similar films that shared narrative insularity and lazy critical reaction, both Zhang Yimou and Sofia Coppola broke new ground in 2006. The former did so by marrying his recent fetish for opulence and acrobatics with sublime dashes of Greek and Shakespearean

tragedy and the young Coppola by allowing the third of her cautious wallflowers to bloom in an environment as specific as it was timeless. To dislike either of these films is personal prerogative, but to ignore their true intentions is irresponsible—*Marie Antoinette*, in particular, hides a delicate profundity beneath its candy shell and arresting anachronisms.

**5 PAN'S LABYRINTH** – Mexican fantasist Guillermo Del Toro has finally become a masterful storyteller rather than a merely impassioned one.

Awash in the traditional tenets of fairytales (recognizable archetypes abound), but grimmer than Grimm and with a social conscience as big as its considerable heart, Del Toro has, with *Pan's Labyrinth*, at last fashioned a worthy conduit for his fantastic imagination.

**4 THE LIVES OF OTHERS** – Germany's candidate for the Best Foreign Picture Oscar is the best debut of the year. A quietly devastating peek through the Berlin Wall into 1984-era East Germany, the film centers around a writer, his actress wife, and a member of the Communist government's secret police who listens to the couple's every move from the attic of their apartment building. To say any more would be a crime, but if the last beat doesn't leave you choked up, you should consider a future in Fascism. Look for it in February.

**3 LITTLE CHILDREN** – A master class in how to adapt an unruly novel for the screen, Todd Field's treatment of Tom Perrotta's book makes full use of the cinematic medium to birth (gorgeous) flesh and blood from the author's words. By turns lighter and darker than *In The Bedroom* but consistently more ambitious, Field's sophomore effort flawlessly juggles various flavors of suburban depravity—from adultery to pederasty to truly committed forays into the wide world of Internet porn—in its quest to unearth the Hobbesian tenets our contemporary social networks still rest upon. It's *Blue Velvet* for the PTA crowd, and though it features the year's best performance in the unlikely form of one-time Bad News Bear Jackie Earle Haley, methinks the marginally deserving Eddie Murphy won't be willing to share his Oscar.

**2 LADY VENGEANCE** – Another year, another ignored masterpiece from Park Chan-Wook. The conclusion to his informally titled "Vengeance Trilogy," *Lady Vengeance* is both the series' gentlest and most devastating installment. The deceptively sloppy tale of the beautiful Lee Geum-ja's prison stint and her post-release agenda spends its first hour in a darkly comic chronological quagmire but makes a masterfully sly transition into an opera of immaculately calculated horror that has Kevin Spacey's John Doe looking downright lazy. With all the gothic visuals, baroque strains, and moral predicaments that viewers have come to expect from the unofficial herald of the Korean New Wave, *Lady Vengeance* is not only the perfect compliment to *Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance* and *Oldboy*, it might be the best of the bunch.

**1 CHILDREN OF MEN** – Alfonso Cuarón achieves a Herzogian level of directorial eclecticism, doing for Vonnegut-tinged sci-fi what he has already done for Harry Potter, little princesses, and Mexican three-ways. Adapted from P.D. James' less-than-wonderful novel about a dystopian near future in which all the world's women are infertile, in Cuarón's hands *Children of Men* blooms into an examination of humanity's precarious relationship with hope. The perfect casting of Clive Owen and Michael Caine immediately stifles all potential pretension, and the film's technical presentation (Emmanuel Lubezki's cinematography is ground-breaking, his 2027 London made impossibly organic) is as much of a miracle as the pregnancy that drives the story. Beyond the wizardry and precision of it all is a brilliantly crafted tale that turns potentially laughable B-movie moments into the stuff of lifetime achievement montages. *Children of Men* doesn't just find hope when all hope is lost, it also presents a hope that is our only means to any conceivable end. ■





**HIGH FIDELITY** JOHN CUSACK PLAYS IT EMO IN JAMES STROUSE'S *GRACE IS GONE*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PLUM PICTURES

## A Place in the Sundance

With 15 films screening at the prestigious festival, film at Columbia has never looked better

BY MARTA JAKUBANIS

**V**enice may hold the world's oldest film festival, and Cannes' may be the most fashionable, but it is Park City, Utah, that hosts the largest independent film festival in the United States. And this year, a sizable Columbia contingent is making the trip. The Sundance Film Festival will screen an unprecedented 15 films made by University students and alumni, including five dramatic features, one documentary, and nine shorts.

The filmmakers faced tough competition just to have their films screened. This year, only 122 feature films were selected from more than 3,000 submissions. Newcomers abound, due in part to the festival's reputation for launching new talent. Filmmakers like Robert Rodriguez, Quentin Tarantino, and Kevin Smith all got their starts at Sundance.

Having a feature screened alongside the U.S. premiere of French director Luc Besson's newest work, *Angel-A*, would be an honor for any filmmaker, but it's especially humbling for James C. Strouse, a current MFA candidate at the School of the Arts.

"It's unbelievable," he said, "because Sundance is not only a first-rate festival, but it's also an amazing organization, responsible for helping so many talented writers and artists get their stories told." His feature, *Grace is Gone*, is one of three University-related films showing in the Independent Cinema Dramatic Competition. Alfredo de Villa's, SoA '98, *Adrift in Manhattan* and Christopher Zalla's, SoA '04, *Padre Nuestro* will also compete. Only 16 films out of nearly 1,000 entries will screen as part of the category.

The other two dramatic features will be seen as part of the Spectrum program, which, though not part of the competition, is still an incredible opportunity. Patricia Rikken, SoA '03, will show *La Misma Luna*, and Jessica Levin, SoA '02, will show *Dedication*, two of only 24 films in the program. The Spectrum program is designed to showcase the talent and creativity of promising independent filmmakers.

Sundance's contestants are attention-grabbing for their harrowing backstories. Unlike most of her counterparts, Irene Taylor Brodsky did not attend Columbia's film school—she is actually an alumna of the School of Journalism, '97. But this didn't stop her from telling the story of her deaf parents, who underwent cochlear implant surgery in order to gain the sense of hearing.

Brodsky's film, *Hear and Now*, is one of 16 documentaries, chosen from 856 submissions, competing for the award in the Independent Film: Documentary category.

Columbia filmmakers also have a strong showing in the short films category, claiming nine of 71 total shorts, which were chosen from 4,445 submissions. Although the category hardly makes headlines, Tze Chun, CC '02, a film studies major while at Columbia was accordingly touched by the acknowledgement. "Getting into the festival felt like a real affirmation that I could do this on my own," he said.


Chun's "Windowbreaker" will compete in the American Dramatic Short competition, alongside Lilah Vandenberg, SoA '06, with "Bitch." Ian Olds, SoA '06, with "Bomb," Nanobah Becker, SoA '06, with "Conversion," Hope Dickson Leach, SoA '05, with "The Dawn Chorus," and Moon Molson (current MFA candidate) with "Pop Foul."

In the International Dramatic Short category, the University is represented by Anocha Suwichakornpong, SoA '06, with "Graceland," Felipe Gamarano Barbosa, SoA '06, with "Salt Kiss," and Cherien Dabis, SoA '04, with "Make a Wish." Dabis recognized the opportunity for exposure that the honor brings and has noted increased enthusiasm for her feature screenplay, *Amreeka*, which is currently in the financing stage.

The Sundance success of current students bodes well for Columbia's film program. Annette Insdorf, professor at the School of Arts film

division and director of the Undergraduate film studies department, attributes much of the school's success to the emphasis on education. "It is grounded in the solidity of the screenplay," she said, adding that it "unifies the study of film history with the creation of original work."

Other professors at the School of Arts, such as Richard Brick and James A. Schamus, emphasized the school's cooperative atmosphere as the distinguishing factor. "When individual students go on to achieve at the highest levels, as they are doing in great numbers this year at Sundance, it's also a testament to their peers and colleagues who have worked so hard with them through every stage of their work," Schamus said. ■



# DVD DOUBLE FEATURE

☒
*Deliverance* (1972)

☒
*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning* (2006)

**IF** you ever needed a warning against vacations in the rural South, this week's movies will scare you straight back into the loving bosom of your harsh, urban metropolis. While adventures through the backwoods might seem like a good way to get closer to your friends, it seems that weapon-wielding, inbred maniacs will usually appear to ruin your fun. *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning* tells the ambitious story of the rise of Leatherface before he even had the mask of human skin that gave him his proper name. Four teens make the mistake of taking a road trip to commemorate the two boys' impending departure to fight in Vietnam, but encounter the chainsaw-crazy family instead. Though quite a bit more eloquent in its presentation, *Deliverance* follows four young men canoeing down an Appalachian river who famously run into trouble upon meeting the locals. Even if you escape, you'll be left scarred and sore enough to never leave Manhattan again.

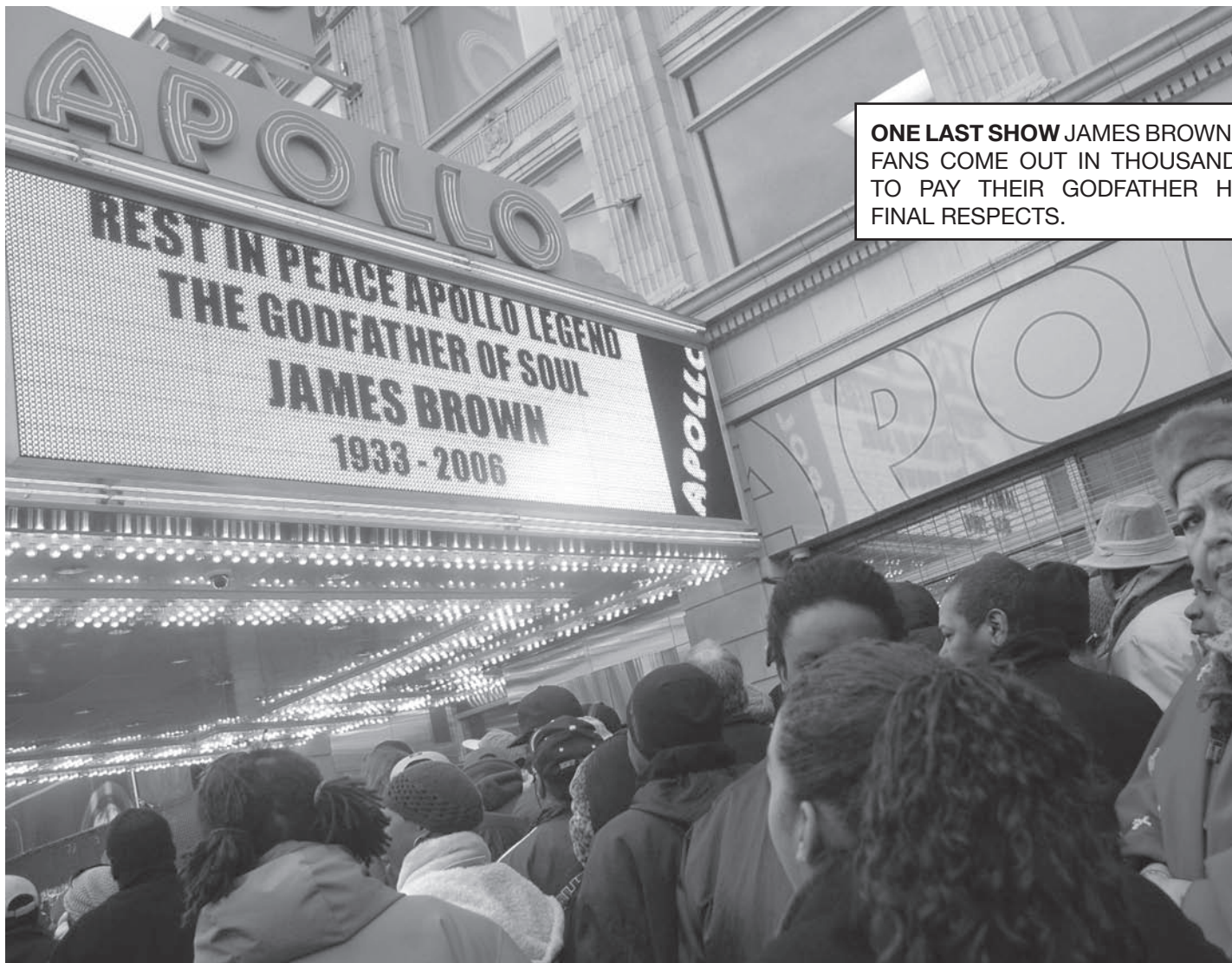




**caUSE-co-MOTION! With Tyvek and THE BLANKETT**  
Silent Barn  
Sat., Jan. 20, 8 p.m.



**Lightning Bolt With Alger Hiss**  
Northsix  
Sun., Jan. 21, 8 p.m.



**ONE LAST SHOW** JAMES BROWN'S FANS COME OUT IN THOUSANDS TO PAY THEIR GODFATHER HIS FINAL RESPECTS.

PHOTO BY ISABELLE MILLS-TANNENBAUM

## A Final Visit to Harlem

### Mr. Dynamite Returns One Last Time to His Old Stompin' Grounds

BY MAXWELL FOXMAN

**B**efore going to his final resting place in Georgia, James Brown made one last stop in Harlem. A white, horse-drawn carriage brought Brown's body to be laid out in an open casket at the Apollo Theater on 125th Street. But hours before, the street filled with residents and fans. The viewing lasted well over 12 hours. While vendors hawked T-shirts, mourners danced to Brown's hits in storefronts.

It is this dynamic cultural landscape—this ability to find joy even in mourning—that was perhaps under-explored in the countless eulogies of Brown. Harlem had a special, formative relationship with the Godfather of Soul, one that influenced both the man and the neighborhood.

The affair began where it ended: at the very place that launched James Brown's career, the Apollo Theater. He first started performing during amateur hours in 1956. At that time, Brown had yet to develop his signature soul screech, though he was still noted for his dancing and performance. In 1963, the Apollo hosted the recording of one of Brown's most acclaimed albums, *Live at the Apollo*. Though the record predates many of his most well-known songs (it does include the early hit "Ill Go Crazy"), it showcases Brown's showmanship and the adulation of the Harlem crowd.

"The Apollo was the original *American Idol*," said Aarian Punter, the media and public relations coordinator for the Harlem music venue and store Big Apple

Jazz/EZ's Woodshed. "It could make or break you." Though late-night television watchers will be familiar with the loud booing and rotten vegetables, Punter added that the right reception could lead to show-business success.

It was this hospitable reception, according to Punter, that led Brown to revisit the Apollo. James Brown credited Harlem as being one of the most hospitable sites for rising performers, Punter explained. "People would open up their homes to him. They would cook for him and stuff like that."

Apollo historian Billy Mitchell recalled one of Brown's many arrivals in Harlem: within minutes, a rapturous crowd, informed by word of mouth, would flock to the singer. Brown appreciated the generosity of the offering and often rewarded fans accordingly. To the historian himself, Brown would hand a "crisp" hundred-dollar bill every time he worked the Apollo. Brown did a great deal for his fans, including performing a free ninety-minute show in front of the Adam Clayton Powell building in order to both promote his last show at the Apollo and gratify his eagerly await-

ing fans. According to Punter, Brown would even buy out the Apollo in order to ensure affordable ticket prices for his Harlem fans. It is for this reason, Mitchell argues, that Brown's attendance records were among the highest at the Apollo. Without fail, lines stretched around the block.

And when the Apollo had financial trouble in the '80s, Brown donated generously to keep it alive. As time went on, it wasn't only the warm reception that residents of Harlem came to appreciate about Brown, whose music would become a seminal part of the race conflicts in the 1970s and 1980s. Both Punter and Mitchell cited "Say it Loud (I'm Black, and I'm Proud)" as a theme song for black pride throughout the country. "People were looting after Martin Luther King died, after the Kennedy assassination," Mitchell said. "So things were very tight in Harlem, and James Brown came out with a record, and, in my opinion, single-handedly quelled the tensions. 'Say it Loud,' along with 'I Don't Want Nobody to Give Me Nothing,' were the impetus for people to stop rioting and be proud of who they were in Harlem."

James Brown also fostered many personal relationships with New York and Harlem residents. The former owner of a home in St. Albans, Queens, Brown was described by Mitchell as always personable, cultivating personal relationships with Harlem leaders such as Reverend Al Sharpton, who looked upon Brown as a father figure and took Brown's advice on, among other issues, his hairstyle.

James Brown was not always in complete harmony with Harlem and New York. His Republican-oriented politics irked some Harlem fans, but as Mitchell and Punter observed: "That was just a political party. That had nothing to do with the way we felt about him and the way he felt about us." And after all, as Punter put it, "you can be Republican and be pulled over while driving if you're black."

Brown's relationship with the residents of Harlem did change gradually as the years went on. Mitchell claimed that a predominantly young, white crowd—possibly discovering Brown for the first time—made up the audience at Brown's final Apollo show in November 2003.

However, both Punter and Mitchell pointed to hip-hop groups which, almost subconsciously, continued Brown's tradition by sampling his beats, his screams, and almost everything else the man did. Mitchell even thought Brown might have managed another hit single

if he had collaborated with a hip-hop group.

Given the heartfelt reception Brown received in Harlem, the man's memory will doubtless live on for years to come. The community continues to be invigorated by and to draw strength from its Godfather. ■

"THINGS WERE VERY TIGHT IN HARLEM, AND JAMES BROWN CAME OUT WITH A RECORD, AND, IN MY OPINION, SINGLE-HANDEDLY QUELLED THE TENSIONS."

—BILLY MITCHELL, APOLLO HISTORIAN



# Sometimes Fuzzy, Always In Tune

Retro-Rockers Assert Insecurities, Yearn to Please

By Glover Wright

**W**e used to feel like we were pretty terrible live," remembers Carey Lander, keyboardist for Scottish retro-pop band Camera Obscura. She speaks softly, seriously, and with a hint of agitation, before breaking into a laugh. "But I think we're a lot tighter now, and people have always seemed to enjoy us."

The way Lander describes her fellow band members—"shy and self-conscious and afraid to let go"—could just as well apply to their music, generally a retro pastiche of '60s and '70s pop and country that, even when it speeds up, never really lets loose. But that's not necessarily a bad thing. The band manages to blend influences (citing Connie Francis, the Supremes, and David Lynch, among others) into music that is catchy and familiar, but elusive enough to feel new.

The band is touring in support of the second single from its 2006 release *Let's Get Out of This Country*, "If Looks Could Kill," a fuzzy, complex pop song that shows off the group's many talents. Lead vocalist and songwriter Tracianne Campbell has a slight voice that serves her well. It's never forced, a little ambiguous, and from time to time fragile. It's also steady and pretty in a casual way that less natural singers have forgotten. Drummer Lee Thomson and guitarist Kenny McKeeve provide the song's near-rollicking backbone, while Lander, bassist Gavin Dunbar, and trumpet player Nigel Baillie warm up the foundation.

"It's quite exciting. This is the second single [the



**CAMERA OBSCURA:** A RETRO PASTICHE OF '60S AND '70S POP AND COUNTRY THAT NEVER LETS LOOSE.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MERGE RECORDS

label is] letting us put out from this album," Lander says. She points out that the band's record label—Merge Records, also home to the Arcade Fire and the Magnetic Fields—generally supports only one single per album by any particular artist. "It's already been used on at least one TV show, and I hope it will get some airplay. It seems like a radio-friendly song."

The latest album's "radio-friendly" sound is somewhat of a departure from the group's two previous releases, though it is in keeping with the band's original retro aesthetic. Though at times louder and faster, the album's 10 tracks are just as self-conscious.

"We're a bit less sort of 'indie' than we were on the first album and are getting braver and learning how to make bigger pop songs," Lander says. "We've always loved old music, and that's always been a big influence. But it

seems like we've been lately listening to a lot more new music, and we're discovering a lot more exciting stuff that you usually don't get played on the radio."

That the band's discography is draped in scare-quotes like "growth" and "evolution" has hardly diminished the band's appeal. Nor have the band's overall songwriting or performing methods relented, Lander says. For Camera Obscura, music functions for its appeal to an audience. "We just try to make music that you would want to listen to," Lander says. "You just try to get people to listen to records and love it."

Camera Obscura will see ample opportunity for crowd-pleasing when it returns to New York this month. The band is scheduled to play Warsaw in Brooklyn on Jan. 24, with opening band The Essex Green.

That doesn't mean that life on the road is without its challenges. "We were pretty surprised the first time we went to America and people were excited to see us," Lander says. "Touring's difficult, and it takes a lot to get your head around going away, but it's also quite responsibility-free once you hit the road. You don't have to worry about things." But regarding the crooners of *Let's Get Out of This Country*, the challenge for Americans will be to keep Camera Obscura here.

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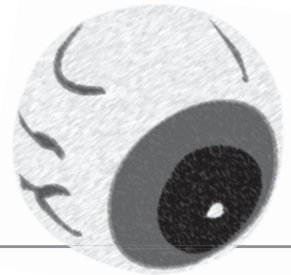
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## the CORE-ner

### Ask Socrates

Dear Socrates,

My best friend recently got engaged to a man she's been dating for seven months. He's a great guy, but he wants her to skip law school so she can move to Boston with him and start a family. I'm not the only one of her friends who thinks she's making a big mistake. How do I approach her about this?

— *Confused and Concerned*

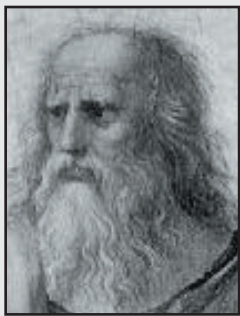
Dear *Confused*,

What is it to approach one's friend?

Dear Socrates,

My son came home yesterday with a pierced ear. He says it's just a way of expressing how he truly feels, but his father says it makes him look effete. They keep trying to drag me into the middle of things. I just want peace! What do I do?

— *Stuck in the Middle*



SOCRATES

Dear *Stuck*,

Does expression function as an end, or merely as a means by which the thing expressed may be invoked?

Dear Socrates,

I'm in love with my secretary. Is the romance worth the professional risk?

— *Alvin Haley, Boca Raton*

Dear *Alvin*,

Is it?



## Battle for Our Borders

### Construction to begin on wall between Columbia and Barnard

BY J.D. PORTER

**T**he debate over the relationship between Barnard and Columbia took a major turn on Wednesday with the announcement that the University will begin building a wall across Broadway in February. President Bollinger described this as "a necessary step in preserving Columbia culture from foreign influences."

The wall will extend from 120th Street to 114th, and Barnard students will need to apply for special papers to get across. The application process is expected to take three years. Columbia students will be allowed through with swipe access.

So far, Barnard administrators have not formally announced a policy regarding their school's receptiveness to migrating Columbia students.

"I hate Columbia," said Dean Dorothy Denburg. "But they have all the math books. So we have to be shrewd here."

The wall has met a mixed response within the Columbia community. Some students, tired of strong Barnard women infiltrating their organizations with

no intention of assimilating, have vowed to guard the wall themselves if necessary. Committed groups include Korean Campus Crusade for Christ, the Kingmen, and the Chicano Caucus.

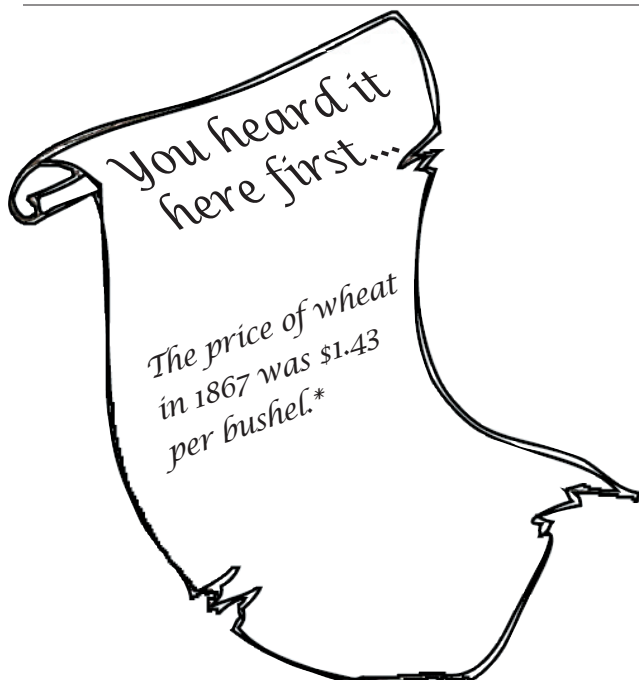
Many Barnard women have expressed concerns that the wall is elitist and bigoted. Mamie Franklin, BC '07, has organized a group called Women Without Borders that will march around and blow whistles "until the rich white men leave their ivory tower, or we knock it down." Wall proponents are not amused.

"This is not about snobbery," said Preston Kingsberry III, CC '09. "It's about following the rules and preserving real boundaries."

Community members within Morningside have expressed concerns about the safety of the wall, as well as its effectiveness.

"How we supposed to turn left without crashing into it?" asked local mechanic Howard James. "And couldn't them women just walk around the edges of the wall? What the hell, man?"

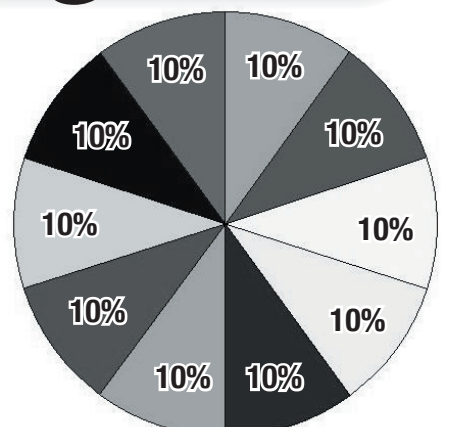
Bollinger has stated that, although he acknowledges that the community exists, he will ignore it.



## What are we doing tonight?

### KEY

- |                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| ■ Going to Lion's Head    | ■ Watching 24           |
| ■ Watching Grey's Anatomy | ■ Not sure              |
| ■ Studying                | ■ Probably going to bed |
| ■ Going to 1020           | ■ Eating at Koronet's   |
| ■ Hanging out with Sandra | ■ Drinking              |



% Based on a survey of 10 people

\*Velden, Thorstein D. "The Price of Wheat Since 1867." The Journal of Political Economy. Vol. 1, No. 1. (Dec., 1892), pp. 68 - 103. </Stor Online>

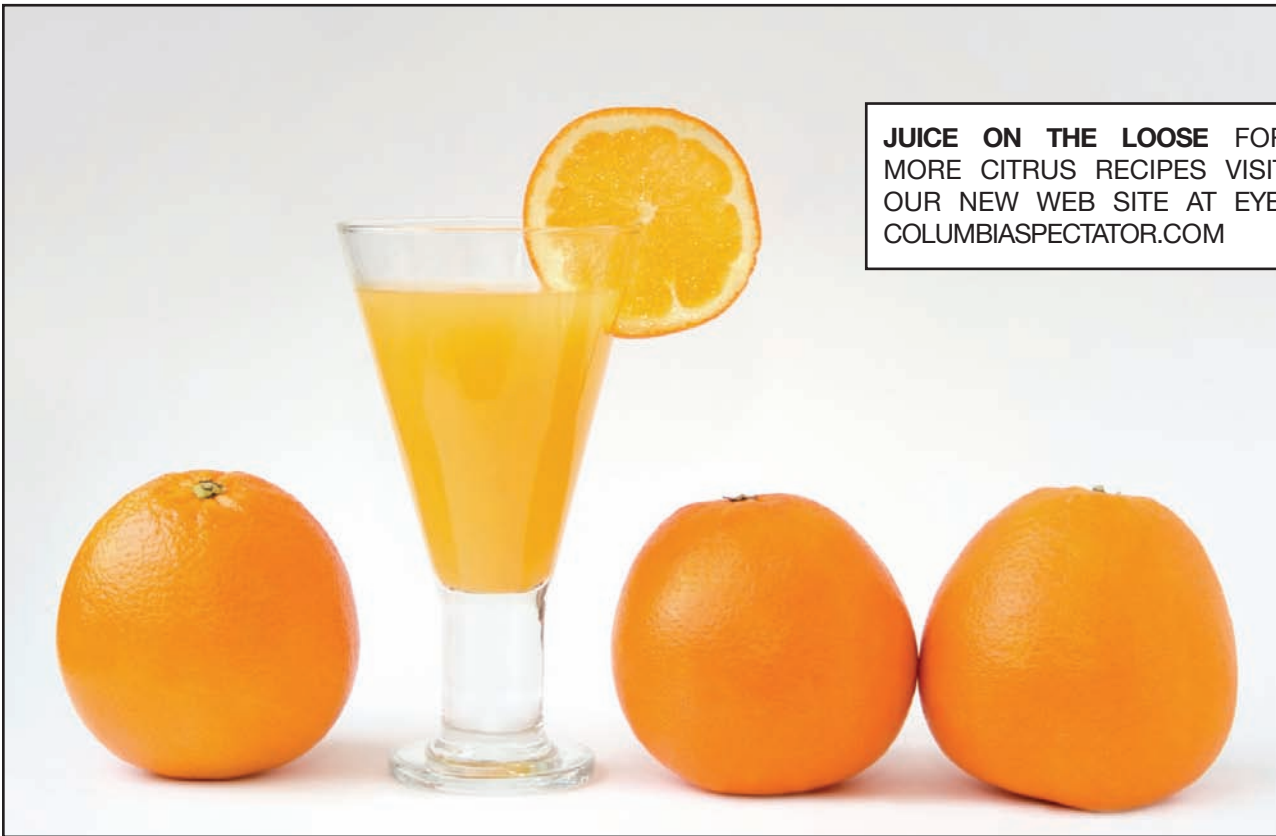


## Ingredients

- 2 oz. gin
- 1 oz. orange juice
- 1 teaspoon superfine sugar
- 1 orange slice

## Directions

In a shaker half-filled with ice cubes, combine the gin, orange juice, and sugar. Shake well. Strain into a cocktail glass. Garnish with the orange slice. Courtesy of [www.webtender.com](http://www.webtender.com).



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## Winter's Forbidden Fruits Citrus Makes for More Than Just a Shot of Vitamin C When the Weather Turns Cold

BY JESSICA BAEK

**B**y December, silhouettes of Christmas trees loom visibly in living room windows. The crisp scent of fresh pine needles wafts throughout the neighborhood, ideally under a blanket of white snow.

That is, of course, if you are from New York. Louisiana celebrates a very different Christmas. They have their Christmas trees, but the branches sport leaves instead of needles, and juicy oranges dangle in lieu of glittery ornaments.

Pine trees only arrived in this southern state in the 20th century. Louisianians housed dwarf citrus plants, which then conveniently produced their own ornaments. But why fruit trees in the middle of the winter?

Unlike most produce, many citrus fruits ripen in the heart of winter. In light of our seasonal delicacy, I've provided a delightful citrus tart recipe: a comprehensive recipe for the advanced baker.

The trick to divining fruit desserts lies in the combination of ingredients. As the saying goes, "what grows together goes together," and all winter citrus fruits complement each other. Bakers opt for the sweeter Meyer lemon or key lime, and while the acidic pink lemon may be a bit too tart, its pink flesh and green-striped, yellow rind make for beautiful garnish. Sweeter citrus include California's famous winter-ripening Washington navel and the more foreign, rich, sweet flavor of the Venezuelan Cara Cara navel orange.

But true exotic taste lies in the fragrant berry-like flavor of our West Coast's purple-fleshed blood orange. Sweeter yet is the Dancy tangerine that waltzes into food marts before the Algerian clementine comes rolling in. "The uglier, the tastier" is a motto applicable to the obscure Mineola Tangelo and Ugli Fruit, created only via grafting.

From the gargantuan pomelo to the minute kumquat, winter citrus are found everywhere in the city. Look for everyday oranges and grapefruits in local supermarkets. The more exotic fruits tempt shoppers at The Garden of Eden or at gourmet specialty shops Dean & DeLuca and Balducci's. Key citrus—small and heavy with a thin and shiny rind perfect for zesting—should be stored in the refrigerator to preserve its natural essence. As for curds, wander to the pantry aisle to invest in premium English jars at \$11.50/11-ounces from Thursday Cottage or Wilkin & Sons' Tiptree line.

Now that you've been deigned citrus scholar, justify your knowledge by transforming a favorite vitamin-C-packed fruit into the ultimate dessert.

## DO IT YOURSELF



### Pastry Shell:

- ✓ 1/4 cup ground almonds
- ✓ 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- ✓ 1 large egg, separated
- ✓ 1 tablespoon ice-cold milk
- ✓ 1/8 teaspoon salt
- ✓ 1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour

### Filling:

- ✓ 4 large eggs
- ✓ 1 cup sugar
- ✓ 2 teaspoons finely grated fresh orange zest
- ✓ 1 1/2 teaspoons finely grated, fresh lemon zest
- ✓ 1/2 cup fresh orange juice, preferably of Mineola Tangelo, blood, or Cara Cara navel oranges
- ✓ 1/2 cup fresh Meyer lemon juice
- ✓ 1/4 cup heavy cream
- ✓ Equipment: 9 1/2-inch round fluted tart pan with removable bottom, pie weights or dried beans

Lightly beat the yolk with milk and set aside. In a food processor, grind the almonds and powdered sugar into a fine meal. Pulse in the flour and salt. Add the cold butter-cubes and pulse several times until the mixture resembles a coarse meal, and the butter is reduced to pea-sized lumps. Pulse in the yolk mixture until the dough gathers into a ball. If you do not have a food processor, cut in the butter with a pastry blender or fork before incorporating the yolk mixture. Press the dough into a 6-inch disk and wrap tightly in plastic wrap. Allow even moisture distribution and gluten relaxation by chilling for at least 1 hour.

Place a rack in the middle of a 350°F oven. Let the dough rest at room temperature for 15 minutes before rolling it into an 11-inch circle between sheets of wax paper. Peel off the top sheet and

invert the dough into the tart pan. Peel off the bottom sheet and fit the dough into the pan, trimming off excess edges. Save scraps to repair cracking during blind baking. Freeze the shell until firm—approximately 10 minutes—to keep it from shrinking during baking. Line the shell with parchment paper and fill with pie weights. Bake for about 20 minutes until the edges are golden and the bottom is set. Remove the lining and weights and gently prick any bubbles with a toothpick to release air. Cover edges with foil and return the shell to the oven until the bottom is golden, 10-15 minutes more. Seal any cracks with leftover scraps and quickly brush the hot pastry with a thin layer of egg white. Cool and place on a baking sheet.

Keeping the oven on, use a fine microplaner to zest the winter citrus fruits. Roll the fruit on the

kitchen counter with a little pressure before cutting the fruit to facilitate juicing. Whisk together all filling ingredients until well combined.

Fill the tart shell and transfer the baking sheet to the middle rack for 20-25 minutes or until the filling is set around the edges but trembles slightly in the center. Cover edges with foil if over-browning occurs. Remove the tart and cool on a rack for about 45 minutes. Cut equal slices onto a dull-finished plate—shiny pans reflect heat, resulting in soggy bottoms.

Though the zest itself provides a beautiful presentation, feel free to top each slice with a dollop of creme fraiche and candied peels or colorful supremed citrus slices with a sprig of mint. Also, long-stemmed glasses of fizzing Moscato d'Asti make a pairing to die for.



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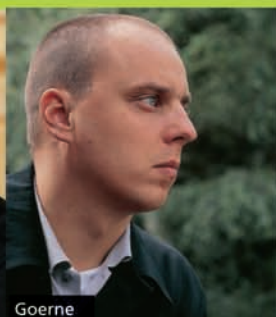
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