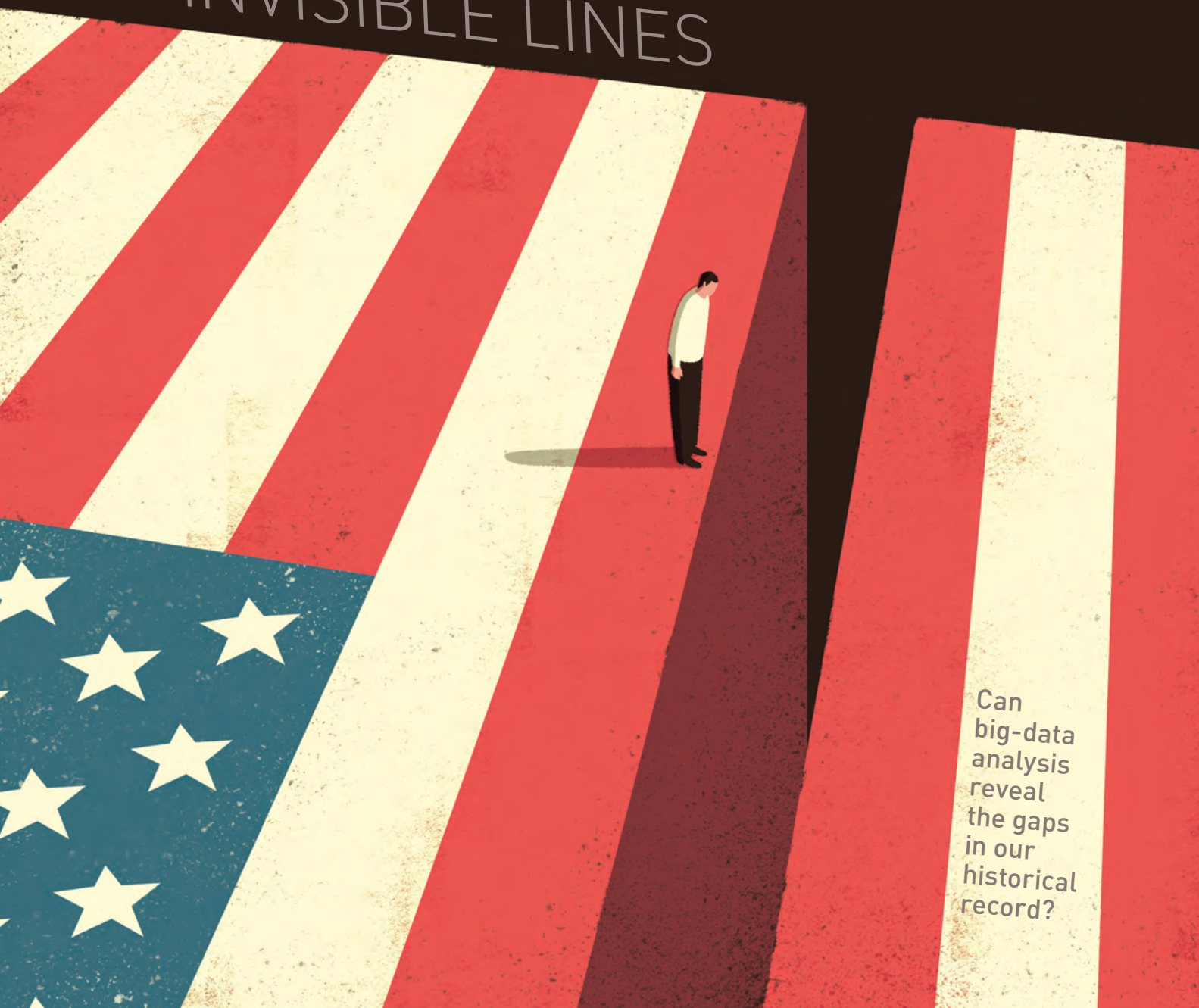


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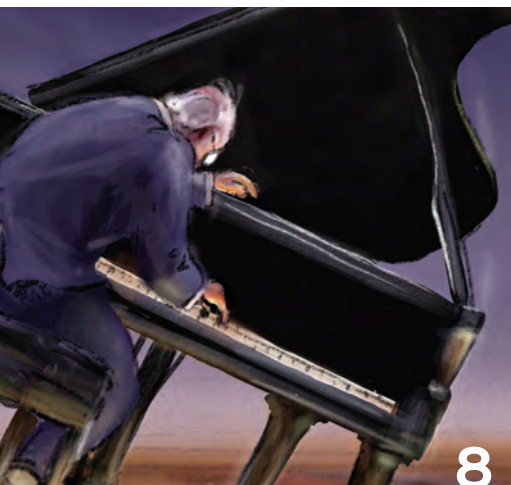
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DEPARTMENTS

- 3 **Letters**
- 8 **College Walk**
Dick Hyman's solo flight . . .
Love, peace, soul, and books
. . . Twinsies . . . The drone will
see you now . . . Arthur Danto
(1924–2013)
- 46 **News**
CUMC breaks ground on one
new building, announces plans
for another . . . Bill de Blasio
touts pre-K at Earth Institute
summit . . . Global Center in
Paris cohosts literary fest . . .
Naval ROTC celebrates return
to campus . . . Second annual
Giving Day raises \$7.8M
- 52 **Newsmakers**
- 54 **Explorations**
- 56 **Reviews**
- 63 **Classifieds**
- 64 **Finals**

FEATURES

- 16 **The Ghost Files**
By David J. Craig
To make sense of the gaps in our public record, historian
Matthew Connelly had to read between the lines.
- 24 **Tales of One City**
By Paul Hond
With many facing hard times, Bill de Blasio won the New York mayoralty
in a landslide. Needless to say, there are great expectations.
- 28 **Bigger than South Africa**
By Mamadou Diouf
The director of Columbia's Institute of African Studies reflects
on the legacy of Nelson Mandela.
- 30 **The Wages of Health**
By Paul Hond
Manmeet Kaur and Prabhjot Singh have studied community-health
networks in some of the poorest regions of the world. Now they're
building one in a place with its own challenges: East Harlem.
- 38 **The Love Song of Miller Theatre**
By Paul Hond
Miller Theatre is celebrating its 25th season with its inimitable blend
of new music, early music, and jazz. Let us go then, you and I.
- 40 **The Wounds of Sun Time: Fiction**
By Parul Kapur Hinzen
A callous act shakes a remote Indian oil town.

IN THIS ISSUE



Matthew Connelly '90CC is a professor of history at Columbia. He codirects the Declassification Engine and is the author of *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population*. >> **Page 16**



Mamadou Diouf is the Leitner Family Professor of African Studies and the director of Columbia's Institute of African Studies. He is the editor, most recently, of *Tolerance, Democracy, and Sufis in Senegal* and *Les arts de la citoyenneté au Sénégal* (with Rosalind Fredericks). >> **Page 28**



Farah Jasmine Griffin is the William B. Ransford Professor of English and Comparative Literature and African-American Studies at Columbia. Her new book is *Harlem Nocturne: Women Artists and Progressive Politics during World War II*. >> **Page 58**

C. DANIEL DAWSON



Parul Kapur Hinzen '89SOA was born in a remote oil town in Assam, India, and lives in Atlanta. Her writing has appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Newsday*, and *ARTnews*. She is working on a novel, from which her story is excerpted. >> **Page 40**



Jim Holt is a contributor to the *New Yorker* and the *New York Times*. His most recent book, *Why Does the World Exist? An Existential Detective Story*, was a National Book Critics Circle Award finalist. Holt studied at Columbia in the late 1970s. >> **Page 13**

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MAGAZINE

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Address and Archive Assistance
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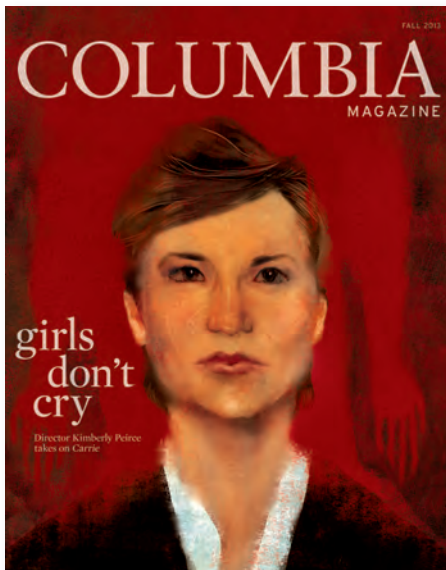
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letters

MOVERS AND DIRECTORS

Paul Hond's splendid article on Kimberly Peirce '96SOA ("Moving Pictures," Fall 2013) brought to mind my eight years as dean of the School of the Arts, and the six women directors who were students during that time. In addition to Peirce, there were Lisa Cholodenko '97SOA, Stacy Cochran '91SOA, Nicole Holofcener '88SOA, Courtney Hunt '94SOA, and Tanya Wexler '95SOA. Each woman's first feature brought her acclaim.

Shortly after I became dean in 1987, I took a trip to California to make contact with SOA alumni working in the film industry. I asked them what had made them decide to go to Columbia.

One young woman answered with an anecdote: She was in her senior year at Penn, wanted to become a filmmaker, knew that NYU had many illustrious movie-making graduates, and applied to NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. She went for an interview and asked about how much access she would have to courses in the humanities. The NYU faculty member said, "Do you want to be a filmmaker, or do you just want to continue your education?" The young woman told me that after she left, she immediately took the 1 train to Columbia, talked with people there, eventually applied, was admitted, and graduated.

From that moment I realized that the Columbia University School of the Arts is the thinking person's art school. That was confirmed for me soon afterward when I met an alumna of what at that time was called the division of painting and sculpture. She told me that as good as the curriculum had been under Andre Racz — a gentleman painter of the old school who taught at Columbia for more than thirty years — by far the most significant experience she had had as an SOA student had been participating in a seminar led by Edward Said.

Everyone knows that study at the Columbia University School of the Arts is enhanced by its being in New York City; but it is, I believe, even more important that it is blessed by being an integral part of Columbia University.

Peter Smith

Dean Emeritus, School of the Arts
York, England

CORPS VALUES

I can't recall feeling prouder of being a Columbian in the last five years than when I read Michael Christman's article on his experience as a Marine in Afghanistan ("Shades of Green," Fall 2013). Yes, "there were plenty of people willing to complain or point out the flaws of the campaigns in Iraq and Afghani-

stan," he says. "But very few people were willing to put their money where their mouths were." Thank you, Captain Christman, for voluntarily risking your life and giving up your comfortable living in Washington, DC, during a time of war to protect our freedom and national interest — while we were complaining that there wasn't enough foam on our Orange Mocha Frappuccinos. You deserve the utmost respect and appreciation from your fellow alumni and every American. God bless you and your men.

Andrew Hon '76SEAS
Potomac, MD

Kudos to Michael Christman, whose article I read twice. He was able to describe eloquently the true experience of many of our men and women in uniform. I applaud him for not making a political statement but a human statement. And for reminding us all that to those who have chosen to serve in the military past and present, we owe our lives and freedom — and of course our Orange Mocha Frappuccinos. Thank you.

Holly Giordano '03SW
Darien, CT

Thank you for publishing Michael Christman's "Shades of Green." His writing is a refreshing change: clear, direct, and with-

LETTERS

out unnecessary words. This style is often found among those who have served under fire, where using four long words where one short word will do could be fatal.

Christman makes two points that merit full attention.

First, “Mental-health experts remind us that the most important thing for these guys to do is to take care of each other, and that talking is the best form of therapy, and they are right. Venting your anger, telling stories, taking a day or two off are all things that help.”

Studies by the Veterans Administration and others confirm that talking is the best form of therapy. “Exposure therapy — reliving a traumatic experience by writing or talking about it — is the only therapy proved effective by independent research,” wrote Kelly Kennedy in a 2008 article in *Army Times*. The bad news is that too often, returning

service members experiencing posttraumatic stress are not given that treatment. Instead of receiving the best form of therapy, they’re handed multiple prescriptions for multiple drugs that do no good and can do harm.

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

At a conference focused on posttraumatic stress disorder held several years ago by the New York State Division of Veterans Affairs, a sergeant who had served under fire in Iraq spoke on a panel. Among other things, she said, “Don’t you dare say that we have a disorder. We’re having a normal reaction to an abnormal situation.”

Most of us see the world as a relatively safe place. Few of us have been in a situ-

ation where there were opponents doing their best to kill us. For those who have, everything is changed forever. There is a chasm between those who have experienced that and those who have not.

It can be lonely. Understanding that loneliness, instead of distancing ourselves from it out of fear, may be helpful.

Thomas F. Barton ’77SW
New York, NY

My memories of my father during World War II are vivid. He was a Harvard graduate and a naval officer who, as captain of an LST, landed troops on the Normandy Beach on D-day. He was exempt from the draft because of his age and his being the father of three children. When I questioned him about choosing to serve, he stated simply that he felt it was his duty. It had never occurred to him to sit out the war.

When I arrived at Harvard in 1957, I was not surprised to learn that some of my classmates were enrolled in the on-campus ROTC program. This program greatly reduced the cost of the four-year education in exchange for four years of military service. The symbiosis between the military and Harvard was unquestioned. When I began my MBA program at Columbia in 1964, the same relationship existed between the University and the military.

However, in the late ’60s this relationship was broken, and in protest of the Vietnam War, ROTC was banned from campus. The program continued but was exiled to Fordham and Manhattan College.

Michael Christman asks, “How could it be that so few Ivy graduates shared in our country’s burden?” There are many answers, but surely one is the low regard the Ivies have had for the military. I, and many of my classmates who served, felt that the decision to discontinue ROTC was wrong. The implication was that the universities and their students were somehow special and needed not serve.

I am delighted that this policy has been reversed and now at both Harvard and



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MEMBERSHIP ADDS UP

Columbia ROTC students can be seen attending class proudly in uniform. Our country needs them.

Gerard Cassedy '65BUS
Saint Augustine, FL

CARBON SENSE

Your otherwise informative article “The Carbon Eaters” (Fall 2013) unfortunately includes the ridiculous statement that “since the Industrial Revolution, the amount of carbon dioxide in Earth’s atmosphere has risen more than 40 percent, sealing in heat and wreaking havoc with our climate.” The second part of this is pure scare propaganda, and completely insupportable. Can we have some editorial quality control here?

John McClaughry '60SEAS
Concord, VT

THE ECO OPTION

Columbia Magazine’s Fall 2013 article “The Pillage Option” brings to mind the work of some European jurists, including Professor Mireille Delmas-Marty, of the prestigious Collège de France, and William Bourdon, a Paris lawyer with a strong interest in international criminal law. They have conceived the notion of “ecocide” and argue that pursuing corporations under civil laws is futile; the crime of polluting the world is inherently a crime against civilization. Nothing short of criminal prosecution will suffice, and the ideal venue is the International Criminal Court, though its charter would require substantial modification. But in the current adverse condition of European economics, states are highly unlikely to attack offending corporations. Worse yet, European politics is riddled by endemic corruption, and until that is dealt with, ecocide won’t see the light of day.

Robert Kulp '59GS
Lille, France

WARMING SHOTS

Judging from your “Global Warnings” College Walk piece in the Fall 2013 issue, Columbia’s just-launched Center on Global

Key to Abbreviations: Each of the following school affiliation abbreviations refers to the respective school’s current name; for example, GSAS — for Graduate School of Arts and Sciences — is used for alumni of the Graduate Faculties, which became GSAS in 1979. The only code not associated with a particular school is HON, which designates that person the recipient of an honorary degree from the University.

CODE	SCHOOL
BC	Barnard College
BUS	Graduate School of Business
CC	Columbia College
DM	College of Dental Medicine
GS	School of General Studies
GSAPP	Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation
GSAS	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
JRN	Graduate School of Journalism
JTS	Jewish Theological Seminary
KC	King’s College
LAW	School of Law
LS	School of Library Service
NRS	School of Nursing
OPT	School of Optometry
PH	Mailman School of Public Health
PHRM	School of Pharmaceutical Sciences
PS	College of Physicians and Surgeons
SCE	School of Continuing Education
SEAS	Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science
SIPA	School of International and Public Affairs
SOA	School of the Arts
SW	School of Social Work
TC	Teachers College
UTS	Union Theological Seminary

Energy Policy might want to rethink its mission statement — specifically, the parts about conducting “balanced” research, rejecting “easy answers,” and building an “intellectual energy community” on the Morningside Heights campus. Clearly, based on his recent speech, the head of the center has already made up his mind that climate change is the only concern that public officials should consider when it comes to energy policy. The categorical statement that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are “global pollutants” that need to be capped, priced, and taxed betrays Jason Bordoff’s ideological bias, to the extent that this was not already obvious from his previous stint as a climate-change official in the Obama administration.

The inconvenient truth is that the science behind man-made, carbon-driven climate change is still far from settled. While envi-

ronmentalists have successfully leveraged the US courts and administrative agencies and the United Nations to push their anti-fossil fuel agenda, there has never been an organized public debate about the merits of the case. Over the past thirty years, the main advocates of this theory have been environmental activists, academics, and career politicians, with much of the “supporting” data kept by an insular scientific community that does not respond well to outside inquiry. Doubtless, all of the “graphs, statistics, and geopolitical data” used by Bordoff in his presentation showed the much-hyped hockey-stick pattern in global carbon emissions in recent decades, while failing to explain why average global temperatures have essentially not moved since the late 1990s.

However, even in the absence of conclusive data to support its original core the-

LETTERS

sis, the climate-change movement refuses to go away. The crisis formerly known as global warming has now been successfully repackaged such that any unusual climatic phenomenon anywhere in the world becomes instant free marketing and further validation, with Superstorm Sandy and November's Typhoon Haiyan being the latest examples. Now, even a "ninety-eight-degree afternoon in July" in New York City would appear to stand out as a remarkable climate event. The only positive takeaway from your article is that barely thirty people turned out for Bordoff's lecture, which may indicate that the general public is finally starting to grow tired of hearing about the end of the world on the back of every extreme weather event. That line of reasoning eventually got old even back during the much-colder Dark Ages.

Paul H. Tice '83CC

Managing Director and Energy
Portfolio Manager, BlackRock
Short Hills, NJ

I don't know why I read *Columbia Magazine*, since I find its liberalism offensive. The College Walk article about Jason Bordoff's global-warming speech perfectly explains my annoyance ("Global Warnings," Fall 2013). Forget the fact that he labels Republicans as too stupid to use more than three words, while Democrats are so complex that they need a whole paragraph. None of his suggestions will make any difference until we address the real cause of climate change: overpopulation and liberal ideals. First, the earth's renewable resources cannot support seven billion people. Second, the liberal ideal of lifting the economic status of poor nations will result in an exponential growth of carbon emissions.

The only way to address climate change is to employ intelligent population growth. Climate change is not a liberal-only issue, but the green-energy solution is. If liberals were as smart as they believe, they'd focus on solving the real problem. Alas, just as in Obamacare, liberals never identify the real problem; they just implement a fix because

they think they know what's best. I find that disheartening as I look to the future.

Robert Dietrich '90SEAS

Oxford, PA

JFK'S MISSILE SECRET

I agree with Thurston Clarke's assessment of JFK as represented by William Keylor in his book review "Autumn of the President" (Fall 2013). The world would be completely different today had Kennedy lived. I served in the USAF Security Service from 1961 to 1964 — from the construction of the Berlin Wall to the election of LBJ — including eighteen months at its HQ in San Antonio during which the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred.

I was just three weeks into my one-year tour in Trabzon, Turkey, on the Black Sea ninety miles from the Soviet border, when Kennedy was assassinated. I am surprised, however, that fifty years later, the myth that he "stared down" Khrushchev over Cuba is not fully recognized for what it is. Kennedy bargained on his own with the Soviet leader and agreed to swap out the aging US Jupiter missiles from Turkey for the withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba. Few people knew about this. With midterm elections pending in early November 1962, he kept it a secret from the American public.

The secret endured for more than twenty years. While I was stationed at Trabzon, I met several employees of Hawker Siddeley (diesel engines) and Marconi (electronics) who were working under NATO contract to retrain Turkish missile men in radar at Rize, on the Black Sea halfway to the Soviet border from Trabzon. They were from England, Scotland, Ireland, and France. This was not classified information and was openly known. Still, I never said anything about it and never heard anything until the 1980s. I worked in an area that did not officially exist.

I think the secrecy was a huge mistake, and in a democracy such as the US, the public should have been told.

Gary D. Chance '69GS, '73BUS

London, England

A GOOD MAN

I enjoyed "Street-Beat Confidential," Paul Hond's article on Juan González (Summer 2013). It gave González a life and personality not known before to this Amy Goodman fan.

Ethel Radskin-Silverberg '50GS

Albany, NY

FAX HUNT

The fax machine was around even before its military use in World War II, as mentioned by Gordon Eliot White in his letter published in the Fall 2013 issue. I remember seeing a fax machine in operation in the RCA pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1939. The machine was described at that time as the forerunner of the coming means of providing up-to-the-minute printed news to the public in place of the daily newspaper.

Burton Kreindel '56SEAS

Newton, MA

REDUNDANCY STILL PERSISTS

Joseph Davis's letter in your Fall 2013 issue defending the redundancy of "could not help but" took me back to the early 1950s, when I was studying for my master's in electrical engineering at Columbia. As I recall, I took a course given by Lotfi Zadeh on information theory, as mathematically quantified by Claude Shannon of Bell Laboratories.

In theory, if a language had zero redundancy, a single error would leave an entire message unintelligible. But languages are not constructed that way. For example, how important is the word "the"? Russian does not contain the equivalent of that word. But [the] Russians can communicate quite well without it. There is sufficient redundancy in the context for the meaning to be clear.

I think that this letter is intelligibly written. But see how many redundancies it contains, and how strange it would appear without them, but how little information would be lost. So why use redundancy? If it makes for more pleasant or easier reading, do it.

Matthew W. Slate '54SEAS

Waltham, MA

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PHILIPPE LECHIEEN

Get Happy

Dick Hyman '48CC, the mild-mannered jazz pianist known for his Faustian virtuosity, broad repertory, multi-style mastery, prodigious output, and vast musical knowledge, is a Yamaha artist, but that didn't stop him from giving me a one-hour solo massage in front of two hundred people in St. Peter's Church in Midtown the day before Thanksgiving.

I'm a Baldwin — a concert grand — a seven-footer if you must know — but if Mr. Hyman didn't mind, I'm sure that made two of us. It's not every day you get your

ivories jitterbugged by an American master. Your pedals pumped. Your hammers struck. Your wires trembled. I'd heard a rumor that Mr. Hyman never misses a note, a claim I am now fit to substantiate. Nothing assaults one's architecture like the vibrations produced by a clinker, and I waited the whole set, through breathless thirty-second-note runs and a left hand striding and jumping to beat the band, waited for the misstep that is bound to occur when a single piano is made to sound like three. It never did. As Mr. Hyman finished and

people stood to applaud, I felt as bruised and fulfilled as the Savoy dance floor after a night with Whitey's Lindy Hoppers.

Mr. Hyman is eighty-six years old — approaching Eubie Blake territory, as we like to say. But when you've been in the game for almost seventy years — when you've studied with Teddy Wilson, jammed with Charlie Parker and Lester Young and Zoot Sims, been musical director for Benny Goodman, served as pianist and arranger on a dozen Woody Allen movies, made more than a hundred records under

your own name (including studies of Scott Joplin, Fats Waller, and Duke Ellington), imbibed the history of jazz piano and lived to tell its secrets in a book of transcriptions based on his CD and DVD package *Dick Hyman's Century of Jazz Piano* — well, then, surely you're young at heart.

In the past two years, Mr. Hyman has recorded three CDs, all duos (with his violinist daughter, Judith Hyman; the clarinetist Ken Peplowski; and the singer Heather Masse). The pianist acknowledges that this recent productivity, however impressive, marks a slowing down. "When I look back on the stuff I used to do, I can't believe it," he said by phone a few days after our concert, speaking in a rich subwoofer radio voice gone basso profundo from a head cold. "But there it is." He mentioned his studio years in the 1950s and '60s, when he'd do two or three sessions in a day and then go home and stay up all night writing an arrangement. "I don't have that stamina anymore, I'm afraid."

Well, I don't know what he *did* have that Wednesday inside the polygonal, high-windowed sanctuary of the performing arts-fostering church on Lexington Avenue, but it was something more than stamina. Mr. Hyman, in a dark suit, white shirt, and yellow tie, hedges of white hair framing a noble pate and combed back into a wave that curled just past his collar, pale, clear eyes, and a nose as Karl Malden's might have looked had it not been twice broken, sat before me with his supple hands light upon my enamel.

He began with "Get Happy," a signature piece of his idol, Art Tatum. It was an admonition, a gleeful mood-setter, but halfway through it occurred to me, as I rumbled with that swift and swinging bass line, that, while full of earthly life, this was in fact a song about going across the river to that peaceful other side. Mr. Hyman followed this with "Bridge over Troubled Water" (more rivers), turning the gospel-pop hit into a fifty-foot-tall wedding cake with lots of pentatonic frosting. What next? A key chomper by Jelly Roll Morton called "Grandpa's Spells" that rang my coils with the bells of

Bourbon Street and made everyone forget about the nor'easter outside. Then a tune called "Lonely Melody," recorded by cornetist Bix Beiderbecke with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra in 1928, when Mr. Hyman was cutting his own teeth instead of mine, and in his hands it was the opposite of lonely, for Mr. Hyman summoned all the good New Orleans ghosts from my bellows. But just when I detected a theme of mortality running through the dense harmonic jungles, the pianist turned to stride-piano master James P. Johnson's "You've Got to Be Modernistic," explaining to the audience that, in the 1920s, "modernistic" meant "far out" — softly italicizing these terms like a man outside of time. He played some augmented chords, called "crazy chords" in Johnson's day, and showed us how Johnson inserted this then-subversive device into the parlors of 1930. Next, he introduced Thelonious Monk's "Misterioso" with what could be his own epitaph: "It's as mysterious as it is simple."

After capping the set with a Tatumesque "Autumn Leaves" (autumn again: I felt a chill), and with everyone wanting more, Mr. Hyman stated that he would take a request.

"Under two conditions," he said. "One, I have to know it." Laughter in the sanctuary. "Two, I have to like it." More laughter. "Skylahk!" yelled a woman in the back.

Multiple voices. "Look for the Silver Lining," said a man.

"Skylahk!"

"Drop Me Off in Harlem," said a young woman near the front.

Duke Ellington. The song easily satisfied Mr. Hyman's criteria. He sat down and swung this Baldwin chariot uptown, and as we flew together over the Manhattan spires, I thought, with a pianissimo shudder, *drop me off* . . .

"I got a rather plaintive e-mail the other day," Mr. Hyman said later from his home in Venice, Florida, "from a fellow who said his father was only a year younger than I, and getting to be in bad shape, and how did I do it?" The pianist laughed with a chime of self-deprecation. "On the other hand, he

said his father had been forcibly retired at sixty, and didn't know what else to do with his life. Whereas I've never stopped."

"Never," I said. "You've never stopped."

"There are still things I'm exploring and trying to be more proficient at. And then, too, as you get to be — I have to admit — elderly, it's a matter of maintaining stuff that you've always played. But if you don't play it every night and every day, you find it necessary to review it. So I prepare things a little more for concerts — I think about tunes, I put them on a list, and sometimes have some music in front of me."

"When you say you're trying to become more proficient — do you mean at a particular style?"

"Ideally, I'd love to (and I've been doing it, too) introduce more counterpoint in my playing. I'd love to be able to improvise in a Bachian manner, with both hands. I haven't arrived there yet, but I'm a little closer."

I then said, because it had been on my mind, "I noticed you're a Yamaha artist."

I wasn't trying to get personal. I was just wondering. That's when he told me.

He said, "I was a Baldwin artist for thirty years. Then they went out of business."

Out of business? Finito? Baldwin Pianos? It was the first I'd heard of it. My lid nearly dropped.

"I moved over to Yamaha," Mr. Hyman said. "I like Yamahas a lot. They're excellent performing pianos. Lightweight, which is what I prefer. They're much more similar from piano to piano, and if you're the kind of peripatetic player that I am, it's comforting to know that it's going to be pretty much what you expect."

I trilled a laugh — Mr. Hyman's pragmatism is part of his charm — but now I knew why I'd felt that little shiver in "Get Happy" and "Autumn Leaves." The bell was tolling for me.

"But you were a Baldwin guy for thirty years," I said, with a slight tremolo. "You must have loved the Baldwin, then, at some point."

"I did like the Baldwin," he said, with tenderness. "Very much."

That warmed me. “Can you say what you liked about it?”

Perhaps it was I who hit a clinker. Mr. Hyman got quiet, except for the epiglottal stirrings of a faint discomposure.

“Mmm. Er. Well, I don’t know. I liked that they were available. And that the company made them available to me. A lot of these relationships have to do with mundane things like, ‘Can you provide the piano and not charge too much for

it?’ In the end, it was sad to see Baldwin go under.”

I had to agree. I said, “You’ve encountered countless pianos in your career. Do you ever think about favorite pianos that you’ve had? Special ones? Is there a relationship that one has to individual instruments over a career?”

“Mmm . . . No. Not exactly.”

“Ah.” I could hardly press him further. I felt the blues coming on, a train around the

bend, like the train sound in “Honky Tonk Train Blues,” by Meade Lux Lewis, which Mr. Hyman played and transcribed and explicated in *Dick Hyman’s Century of Jazz Piano*.

But then, as he always does, Mr. Hyman set things straight, reminding us all that the music isn’t about the dead wood, but, rather, the living flesh.

“I found out long ago,” he said, “that if you practice enough, every piano in town feels great.” — *Paul Hond*

All the Right Moves

Inside Le Monde restaurant on a recent Monday evening, servers whooshed across the scuffed black-and-white tile floor carrying petite black cauldrons of wine-soaked mussels that trailed steam past the table where Ericka Blount Danois ’04JRN and J-school professor Samuel Freedman sat toasting the publication of their books.

Danois’s book, her first, called *Love, Peace, and Soul: Behind the Scenes of America’s Favorite Dance Show Soul Train: Classic Moments*, tells the complicated history of the TV show owned and hosted by Don Cornelius, a man who effectively became, as the *Chicago Tribune* wrote in 2012, “the most powerful DJ in America.” Cornelius created one of the first integrated television experiences in the US, withstanding an enormous amount of racist pushback.

For Danois, *Soul Train* had been a family activity. “We’d sit and watch together,” she said. “My mother and sister had Afros, and we’d all be wearing butterfly collars and bell-bottoms.” Danois’s father was a DJ.

Danois had planned to interview Cornelius for her book, but soon after she received her contract, he committed suicide at the age of seventy-five.

One of the first people Danois called after learning of Cornelius’s death was

Sam Freedman. The two had met in the summer of 1998, when Danois was a part-time student in the J-school’s core reporting class, RW1. Although the book did not originate in Freedman’s fabled book seminar, which has seen sixty-six books contracted during the twenty years he’s taught the class, Freedman helped shepherd Danois’s book to publication, providing interviewing and reporting tips as well as moral support. “Ericka is much faster than me,” Freedman said. “I was still plodding along and she was working at warp speed.”

Love, Peace, and Soul was published the same month as Freedman’s sixth book, *Breaking the Line: The Season in Black College Football That Transformed the Sport and Changed the Course of Civil Rights*. The book focuses on the head coaches of the historically black Grambling College and Florida A&M, which in 1967 faced each other in the Orange Blossom Classic, or what has come to be called “the black Rose Bowl.” The story follows Florida A&M coach Jake Gaither as he organizes his team’s first game against the mostly white team from the University of Tampa in 1969, culminating in one of the largest racially integrated events of the time. Meanwhile, the coach at Grambling,

Eddie Robinson, strategizes and succeeds in placing the first black full-time starting quarterback in the NFL.

Danois and Freedman have teamed up for a few readings and events to promote their work (they’ll appear at Book Soup in Los Angeles in late January), since both books use shared cultural experiences to illuminate America’s history of segregation.

“The quarterback was the last position to integrate because it is the thinking and leadership position,” Freedman said. “The question always was: are blacks smart enough? At one point this year, there were nine black quarterbacks starting in the NFL and a large number of black team executives. But the same fears are attached to a black quarterback as a black president. Are blacks permissible heroes?”

In music it was different. The Top 40 in the 1970s was radically egalitarian compared to television, encompassing pop, soul, country, and rock. Television, meanwhile, had only seven channels. Freedman recalled walking around with friends from his suburban New Jersey high school, repeating Cornelius’s tag line, “love, peace, and soul,” trying to get their voices down into the Cornelius sub-octave.

“I didn’t really have ears till I was in college — I came late,” Freedman said to

Danois. “But you had the opposite exposure, since your father was a DJ.”

“My father was a rebel,” said Danois. “He grew up in one of the only black families in a white neighborhood in Nyack. He started a record collection in the ’60s and worked in a bookstore and a record store, and as a DJ. It’s funny: my grandfather

thought my father should have a respectable nine-to-five job, but all he cared about were records and books. And now he’s a teacher at St. Hilda’s right up the block and helps kids with reading comprehension after school.”

Danois has a boxed set of Soul Train DVDs that she shares with her own chil-

dren, just as her father shared the show with her. As a shy kid who read voraciously, Danois connected deeply with her father’s quiet, observant nature.

“He gave me books, and music was playing all the time. If I had a problem, he’d give me Judy Blume and Etta James.”

— Kelly McMasters ’05SOA

Doctor! Doctor!

Fraternal or identical? The twin brothers Vincent and Eugene Dinescu claim they are the latter. Here are some reasons why:

They both stand 5’10” and weigh 190 pounds. They look — identical. Even their vein and muscle patterns are virtual mirror images of each other’s. They display the congruent thinking associated with identi-

cals. They’re both pre-med General Studies students, due to graduate this spring.

But not *everything* about them is the same. Eugene lives in Riverdale, has a website, and is single; Vince lives on West 112th Street and lacks a Web presence but not a girlfriend. Nor do they always look alike. Recently, Vince shaved his head, while Eugene has thick, dark hair. Vince

wears glasses; Eugene does not. And then there’s the small matter of their birth certificates, which say, officially: fraternal.

So while it’s possible that the Dinescus are Morningside’s version of Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen — fraternal twins who simply bear a remarkable likeness to each other — they won’t know for sure until they get genetically tested. “We have a theory that we were wrongly identified as fraternal,” says Eugene, the younger by a minute.

There have been several pairs of identical twins at Columbia who have continued to lead parallel lives as adults. Among them are ArtsPower National Touring Theatre founding codirectors Gary and Mark Blackman ’78CC, the jugglers Jake and Marty LaSalle ’07CC, and Daniel and Gabriel Castillo ’10CC, who competed for spots on Panama’s 2012 Olympic boxing team.

The Dinescus can relate to that kind of affinity. “We want to end up at the same med school,” says Eugene, seated with Vince in a room in Lerner Hall, dressed in a light gray suit, white shirt, and blue tie. “There’s no way I’d have any motivation to be the best I could be if I didn’t have my brother alongside me.”

“If you look at couples who’ve been married for twenty, thirty years, there are still things they may not tell each other,” says Vince, wearing a tan suit and a pink, open-collared shirt. “But when you’re twins, you can say anything you want to



MARK STEELE

say. It's total freedom. It's like you're talking to yourself."

"Do you know how comforting that can be?" Eugene says. "For the psyche? In a very difficult environment like med school, it can be very beneficial."

Born on June 18, 1989, to Romanian immigrants, the Dinescu twins grew up in North Brunswick, New Jersey. They were so close that when they entered John Adams Elementary School, they couldn't bear to be away from each other. "The moment I got to school," Eugene recalls, "I would go to my class for attendance, and as soon as the teacher turned her back I would be gone to find my brother."

Such antics prompted counselors to separate the two and place Eugene in a school on the other side of town. The pair reconnected in fourth grade. Eugene spent much of his time trying to catch up to Vince academically. He also began leading him astray.

"We would routinely skip homeroom in order to enjoy a McDonald's breakfast down the street," Eugene recalls, "or cut the entire day to go over to our friend's house."

When they were fifteen, an agent for Boss Models spotted them on a Manhattan street. That led to a couple of years of engagements doing commercial print work in fitness and apparel ("lots of underwear ads," says Eugene). "We were dating older girls," says Vince. "It was good because we were exposed to —"

Eugene interrupts him. "Let's just say we had a very active dating experience."

Modeling jobs led to more missed classes, as did their mother's struggle with cancer. Instead of graduating from high school, they took and passed the GED on the same day. Then, together, they entered Middlesex County College, in Edison, New Jersey. Even their part-time jobs overlapped: both were mortgage consultants, as well as bouncers at various New Jersey nightclubs.

"The club owners thought we were cops," says Vince. "They liked us because we both had shaved heads at that time." As far as actual bouncing was concerned, their approaches differed. It was Vince, the quieter one, who tended to be the chucker-out. "I think he did it 99 percent of the time," says Eugene. "Me, I

always tried talking to the person and avoided any sort of physical altercation."

That would befit the do-no-harm ethic of medicine, a profession whose seed was planted early in the minds of the Dinescus when their father, having learned his wife was pregnant, brought home a richly illustrated medical encyclopedia. The twins discovered it when they were three. "We found it fascinating right from the start," says Vince. "We picked up the book, and there were all these cool diagrams. We were both very good at drawing, and so we started copying them."

One of these days, the two say, they'll get to the bottom of their true nature. In the meantime, their close, complex, and sometimes confusing relationship matters more to them than appearances or DNA. At one point Vince asks Eugene, as if seeking reassurance, "We've balanced each other out, very much so, isn't that right?"

"Yeah," replies his brother, "I would say there's a nice balance."

— *Thomas Vinciguerra '85CC, '86JRN, '90GSAS*

Drone Onward

Andrea Gilli was under fire. The young Italian visiting scholar at Columbia's Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies sat at a long table in a classroom in the International Affairs Building. He had come that fall afternoon to lecture on drones, the unmanned aircraft that are changing how governments wage war and spy on one another. His main point, delivered in a forty-five-minute presentation, was that drones don't pose a threat to global stability, because most small countries lack the technology to build and operate good ones.

Not all the thirty-odd audience members (including students and professors) gathered around the table were on board.

"Israel has been running drones forever without a satellite infrastructure," said Abraham Wagner, a senior research fellow at the nonprofit Center for Advanced Studies on Terrorism, looking mildly exasperated. "It's not that hard."

"Surely if you're giving a country the capability of seeing everything that goes on in the other country, then that is changing the balance of power," said Stephanie Neuman, the director of the Comparative Defense Studies Program at the Saltzman Institute, which was hosting the discussion.

The disagreement shouldn't have come as a surprise. The crowd included several current and former members of the US

military (bald heads and broad shoulders abounded), as well as others, like Neuman and Wagner, who had made careers of studying — and arguing — warfare.

But Gilli had come in peace. A PhD candidate from the European University Institute in Florence, he wanted only to deflate some of the hype about drones. "This is a drone," he said dryly, showing a slide of a RadioShack remote-control helicopter. "What type of drones are we talking about?"

Some drones, like Northrop Grumman's Global Hawk, are the size of a small house and are extremely difficult to build, he noted. Others can fit in your hand and are

put together fairly easily. “Different drones can be used to do different things,” he said. “Big ones could provide military air support. Lots of little ones could be used as an attacking swarm, like bees.”

Others can’t do much at all. “Domino’s Pizza has its own drone,” Gilli said, referring to a small copter the company used to deliver pizzas in a spring 2013 publicity stunt. “Clearly, building something like that is not hard.”

Although many countries, including Iran and Pakistan, now claim to be manufacturing drones, it’s not yet worth losing sleep

over, Gilli said. “Production capacity does not equal excellence in manufacturing. There are lots of tablets in the world, but only one iPad.” Not only that, but operating a truly effective unmanned vehicle into foreign territory requires a communications infrastructure that only a handful of countries can claim. “Drone warfare is more than drones,” he said. Using them “requires significant resources and capital.”

As for shifting the balance of power? Gilli shot back against his cross-examiners. “Building something with a cheap camera, yes, anyone can do it,” he said. “But you

don’t affect the balance of power. Building something that provides significantly greater capabilities is a different thing.”

After several tense exchanges, Gilli and his adversaries arrived at an agree-to-disagree silence. Austin Long, a SIPA assistant professor and former military consultant, took the opportunity to share his personal experience.

“I’ve flown a drone, and it’s not as cool as you think it is,” he said. “A ScanEagle is about as big as this table. It’s cool, but it’s not that cool. It crashes when it lands.”

— Douglas Quenqua

Arthur C. Danto (1924-2013)

When Arthur C. Danto, Johnsonian Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Columbia, died in October of heart failure at the age of eighty-nine, major obituaries in the *New York Times*, the *Asso-*

ciated Press, the *Guardian*, and elsewhere lauded him mainly as a critic and philosopher of art. Danto’s 53GSAS had “upended” the study of art history by proclaiming the “end of art.” He had “championed” the work of avant-garde artists like Andy Warhol, being the first to grasp the philosophical challenge such work posed to the distinction between art and non-art. His reviews as art critic for the *Nation* — a position he held from 1984 to 2009 — had anatomized the work of artists ranging from Leonardo to Basquiat with “insight” and “erudition.”

All of that is true. What the casual reader of these obituaries might not realize, however, is the magnitude of Arthur Danto’s achievement in the mainstream of contemporary philosophy. Among his thirty or so books are *Analytical Philosophy of History*, *Analytical Philosophy of Knowledge*, and *Analytical Philosophy of Action*. Danto’s turn of mind was indeed “analytical”: when it came to logical acuity, he was in the first rank of professional philosophers. Those who were lucky enough (as I was in the late 1970s) to attend his rotating trio of graduate seminars — titled “Thought,” “Feeling,” and “Action” — will attest to his virtuoso gift for teasing apart sub-

tle concepts and drawing lucid distinctions. And the drawing of such distinctions was crucial to Danto. For he saw philosophical problems as characteristically arising when two things looked exactly alike but in reality were critically different: dreaming vs. waking (Descartes), chance vs. determinism (Hume), machines vs. thinking beings (Turing), a Brillo box vs. a work of art (Warhol). One of his charming examples, which he used to illustrate the subtle logic of human action, was Giotto’s fresco cycle in the Arena Chapel in Padua. In six panels of the cycle, Danto would observe, Christ is depicted with a raised arm, yet he is performing six distinct actions.

But Danto had none of the dryness that is often the fatal flaw of contemporary philosophy. To the contrary, the rich lyricism and humor of his writing (and speech) made him one of the two or three finest prose stylists in the profession. A Danto paper on the logic of mental representation was invariably as enjoyable to read as a Danto review of the latest Whitney Biennial.

He had an intellectual cosmopolitanism that was rare in the insular world of Anglo-American philosophy. An Army veteran of the Second World War (during which he served in



COURTESY OF LUCA DEL BALDO

Italy and North Africa), Danto spent the years 1949–50 in Paris on a Fulbright scholarship, studying with Maurice Merleau-Ponty. He produced pioneering books on continental figures like Nietzsche and Sartre, sympathetically assaying their ideas from the bracing perspective of analytic philosophy.

Danto’s cosmopolitanism was more than merely philosophical. He was at home in any center of civilization, and as at ease in the bohemian world of the New York intelligentsia as he was in the more academic precincts of Morningside Heights. An artist himself before he settled on a career in philosophy — his woodcuts were exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago and the National Gallery in Washington — Danto moved happily in the international art world, forming warm friendships with figures like Cy Twombly and David Hockney. He could be a brutally honest critic, whether of artists, fellow philosophers, or graduate students, but his generosity of spirit and the insightfulness of his criticism more than made up for any bruises.

Danto’s view of philosophy was not without pessimism. At the beginning of his book *Connections to the World*, a lovely introduction to philosophy that was the basis for a popular course he taught to Columbia undergraduates over the decades, he described the history of philosophy not as a matter of continuous progress, but as akin to a repeated waking up from a dream, a dream in which mere appearance had been mistaken for reality. “So,” he wrote, “philosophy does not have a real history . . . Or, more dramatically yet, the history of philosophy is a long nightmare from which philosophy longs to waken.”

Against this somber vision must be set the urbane delight Danto took in art, in ideas, in philosophical disputation, and in the most commonplace aspects of life — like taking his beloved dogs for a walk in Riverside Park or sharing a great cassoulet and bottle of Chiroubles. His capacity for jollity was immense and infectious. Years ago, on the eve of a Twombly exhibition at

the Museum of Modern Art, I was chatting with Danto on the phone about that artist’s work. I told him I was tired of defending Twombly’s “elegant whispers.” Arthur reacted to my phrase with unexpected animation, as if it were a fresh and felicitous trope for Twombly’s art and not a howling cliché. When I repeated the words “elegant whispers,” the misunderstanding became apparent: he thought I had said “elephant whiskers”! In his mind’s eye he had instantly seen the archetypal Twombly painting as a distribution of elephant whiskers across empty space. For some moments, I heard deep and repeated peals of laughter over the line. Though the unconscious brilliance was all on his side, I had to join him. A few days later, a card came to me in the mail from his wife telling me that she had never heard Arthur laugh so loud. — *Jim Holt*

A memorial service is scheduled for Feb. 6. www.magazine.columbia.edu/danto

Song

I.
I made a song in thirds and two remain,
ravined, while seasonally the gully swells
with sound. On the slopes we twine grass,
plait it thickly, its odor in the sun dissolves
with the salt of the sea, forever rising.

II.
He makes a song while winds
strew pebbles aloft
& carry clouds away.

Across a rock slide his trail
scales steep towards three tiers
of willow leaves & lichen

barren of caribou
gone to graze for fall food.

III.
It is said that far beyond Imuruk Basin
huge birds hunt whales on the open ocean.

Once shoved downslope by downbeat gusts
a man alone fell to one knee, erred, aimed
& pierced such a bird between its breast

& the narrow column of its neck. Careening

first up into the air & then a swaying slip
into the valley below

it’s come to rest
beyond the subterranean terminus

of a rivulet sourced from snow on snow.

— *Joan Naviyuk Kane ’06SOA*

*Joan Kane’s collection
Hyperboreal won the
Donald Hall Prize for
Poetry. Kane lives in
Anchorage, Alaska, where
she is working on a novel.*

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Matthew Connelly had an idea for a book.

The Pentagon, he realized, was one of the first organizations ever to undertake a large, scientifically based effort to predict the future. During the Cold War, it had invested billions of dollars into the development of computer-based war games, statistical models, and elaborate role-playing exercises in hopes of anticipating Soviet military activity. How successful had the Pentagon's program been at predicting the Soviets' next moves? And how had the Pentagon's predictions been skewed by the group dynamics of the generals, intelligence analysts, diplomats, and statisticians involved? Did they tend to push more cautious or alarmist conclusions? Did they favor predictions that were too forward-looking to be proved wrong while they were still on the job? These were questions that had never before been thoroughly investigated.

"I thought this would provide insights into how all sorts of predictions get made today, whether about climate change, disease outbreaks, or rogue states acquiring nuclear weapons," says Connelly '90CC, who is a professor of history at Columbia. "How seriously should we take these predictions? And what's the best way to gauge their relative validity? The US government has been in the business of forecasting the future for fifty years, so it seemed logical to evaluate its record."

He didn't get very far. In the spring of 2009, a few months after starting his research, Connelly decided it would be impossible to tell the story that he envisioned. Too little information was available. Connelly had spent long hours researching the Pentagon's forecasting efforts at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, and at other government archives around the country. He had found a decent amount of material related to the program's beginnings in the 1960s, but few records from later decades.

"The Pentagon was certainly making forecasts throughout the course of the Cold War," says Connelly, the author of the 2008 book *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population*. "So it was pretty obvious that the records from the 1970s onward were incomplete."

What Connelly experienced was something that researchers had been complaining about for years: that the National Archives' contemporary holdings had more holes than a donut factory. The problem was that the US government was not releasing classified documents on schedule. Although federal policy requires that most documents labeled "Confidential," "Secret," or "Top Secret" be released within thirty years, by the time George W. Bush left office some four hundred million pages of classified material had been sitting in filing cabinets and on computer hard drives for longer than that. This was evident from the National Archives' own annual reports.

To many people who study the declassification process, this was a startling abrogation of the government's responsibility to act as its own archivist. The only classified documents that were supposed to be kept hidden for more than three decades were those

The Ghost

By David J. Craig

US historians have long complained about gaps in the National Archives. Can big-data analysis show what kinds of information the government is keeping classified?

Illustrations by Davide Bonazzi

Files



whose disclosure would pose a serious risk to national security, such as by revealing details of an ongoing military or intelligence operation. “Very few of those four hundred million pages could possibly have met the standard for remaining secret that long,” says Steven Aftergood, a transparency advocate who directs the Federation of American Scientists’ Project on Government Secrecy. “This was very troubling. The government’s prerogative to classify sensitive materials is supposed to be a temporary refuge from public oversight, not a permanent shield.”

Connelly, when confronted with the gaps he saw in the National Archives, did what he says most scholars do: he muddled through. After reading the documents that were available to him, he cobbled together the best history he could, soon publishing a paper about the power struggles among the CIA, the FBI, and the State Department over whose organization got to issue the authoritative interpretations of the military forecasts made early in the Cold War.

But afterward, Connelly couldn’t put the experience out of his mind. He wanted to know how long it would take the government to release those records. He also wondered: what other stories were hiding in those millions of backlogged documents? Other historians were asking similar questions, but Connelly grew angrier than most. The way he saw it, the government was not just standing in the way of new books being written; it was delaying a revolution in historical scholarship. Connelly was among a small but growing number of historians who believed that the future of his field was in using computers to analyze huge volumes of documents. For years, he had been going into archives with a digital camera and taking photographs of paper records. He would then turn those images into text files and feed them into software that in the aggregate could show him, for instance, where the paths of certain people, institutions, and companies had overlapped at different points in history. He was excited about the prospect of using similar techniques to analyze US government records from the digital era. A lot of sensitive electronic records should have already been declassified, since some federal agencies had embraced digital communications and record-keeping as early as the 1970s.

“There was all sorts of stuff that *should* have been released,” says Connelly, a slight man of forty-five with a boyish smile. “But the vast majority of it was still stuck in the pipeline somewhere. So on the one hand we have this amazing potential to study the inner workings of our government with a level of detail that is astonishing. Yet we’re still waiting for the floodgates to open.”

In early 2012, Connelly put aside his research on the Cold War and began studying US secrecy policy. He learned everything he could about how federal records are created, maintained, and released to the public. He learned that since the 1970s, the government’s budget for reviewing and declassifying sensitive documents had failed to keep pace with the production of new ones. The backlog of secrets had grown significantly following the September 11, 2001, attacks, when federal employees were instructed to be more cautious in deciding whether to release old documents. After Barack Obama ’83CC became president, the glut

shrank a bit, as government censors were told to relax their standards. By the end of Obama’s first term, though, progress plateaued and the size of the backlog stabilized at about 360 million pages.

Then Connelly had an idea: could he use data mining to infer what types of information were being left out of the public record? In theory, this seemed plausible, if he could compile enough materials to work with. He figured he could start by asking Columbia Libraries to give him special access to several commercial databases that the University licenses from academic publishers and which contain federal records. He could then download a wealth of material from government websites. Maybe he could even gather up documents that fellow scholars, journalists, and citizens had acquired directly from the government under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). No one had ever tried to analyze the entire corpus of government records as one big database before. The promise of data mining now made it seem like a worthwhile endeavor to Connelly. He thought that if he were to recruit an interdisciplinary team of data analysts and fellow historians, he might create the first system for highlighting gaps in the National Archives. Perhaps this would even shame the government into releasing more classified materials.

“I thought if this were possible, it would be the most important thing I could do,” he says. “I’d go back to writing books later.”

Connelly would soon cast a new light on why the US government was slow in releasing its secrets. In doing so, he would thrust



himself into a debate that had previously been taking place behind closed doors — a debate about whether the free flow of information and national security are on a collision course.

Toeholds and teamwork

In a small apartment in Harlem, a young mathematician named Daniel Krasner '10GSAS sits at his kitchen table, staring into the soft blue light of his laptop. On the screen is a line graph depicting the number of teleconferences that Henry Kissinger participated in each day while serving as Richard Nixon's secretary of state.

"You see this spike here in late 1973?" says Krasner, pointing to a brief period when Kissinger was holding fifty to sixty teleconferences a day. "That has a pretty obvious explanation — it's during the Yom Kippur war. But what about these spikes, here in 1975, or these in 1976? They could be worth looking into."

Krasner, who earned a PhD in mathematics at Columbia, is among a half dozen computer scientists, mathematicians, and statisticians now working with Connelly on a multimedia research project they call the Declassification Engine. For the past year, this team has been gathering up large numbers of federal documents and creating analytic tools to detect anomalies in the collections. Several of the tools are on the project's website and available for anyone to use. The one Krasner is developing is intended to find evidentiary traces of important historical episodes — a diplomatic crisis, say, or preparations for a military strike — that scholars until now have failed to notice. The Columbia researchers suspect that by spotting something as subtle as an uptick in a diplomat's telephone activity they may be able to reveal the existence of historical episodes that the US government has largely suppressed from the public record.

"If you can make out something happening in the shadows, then we can ask: does it seem curious that little information about this event is available in the public record?" says David Allen, a PhD candidate in history at Columbia who is working on the project.

Some of the material that Krasner is analyzing comes from a collection of 1.1 million telegrams, airgrams, telephone transcripts, and other communication records of American diplomats from the mid-1970s. The database, called the Central Foreign Policy Files, is available today on the National Archives' website, where people can search its contents in rudimentary ways. Connelly, with the help of Columbia's Digital Humanities Center, got his hands on the raw text files from the government. Now he and his colleagues are picking apart the documents using their own software.

"We can also analyze all of the language in these documents as what we call a 'bag of words,'" says Krasner. "By seeing what terms tend to occur together in the same documents at certain times, we could spot interesting episodes."

The Central Foreign Policy Files data set is an unusual collection in that it covers only material from 1973 — which is when the State Department implemented its first electronic records system — to 1976 — which is as far as the department's employees have

progressed in an ongoing effort to translate the files into a format that is Internet-friendly. But the collection has a couple of key advantages. The first is that it is comprehensive for its time period, containing all records of a particular type. Most collections of government documents are, by contrast, curated by archivists and editors to contain only materials thought to be of particular interest to scholars. The inclusiveness of the Central Foreign Policy Files would help the Columbia researchers spot conspicuous gaps.

The other reason Connelly sought out this collection was because of something he remembered seeing in the US State Department's physical files at the National Archives. Often, when looking in a box of diplomatic records, he would find a single sheet of paper, slipped in between the others, that described the rough outlines of a document that appeared to be missing. This sheet usually contained only a date, a title, or subject, and sometimes the name of the sender and recipient. Connelly learned that this was the metadata of a clas-

Something as subtle as an uptick in a diplomat's telephone activity could be the sign of an international crisis that has been suppressed from the public record.

sified document that had been rejected for release — either upon turning thirty or when someone requested it through the FOIA.

"They're not very interesting when viewed one at a time," says Connelly. "You wouldn't think much of them."

But what if you had a quarter million of them? That's how many were in the electronic version of the Central Foreign Policy Files. Every single diplomatic communication that had been transmitted between 1973 and 1976, marked as classified and later rejected for release, was represented by a metadata file.

It was when Connelly acquired this database, in the fall of 2012, that he began to recruit the help of professional number crunchers. First he called up Columbia statistics professor David Madigan, a versatile researcher who had previously developed algorithms that predict the side effects of medications. Then he brought in several members of Columbia's computer-science department who specialize in finding patterns in large amounts of text. Within a few months, they would receive a \$150,000 award from the Brown Institute for Media Innovation, a joint enterprise run by Columbia and Stanford that promotes interdisciplinary projects between journalists and data scientists.

"I'd worked with scientists before, but never like this," says Connelly. "This would be as far as I'd ever strayed from the old model of history I grew up with, where Leopold von Ranke is standing alone atop a mountain, surveying the landscape of time with nothing but the facts in his head and a healthy dose of intuition."

Ethnic profiling, '70s style

Last spring, Connelly and his colleagues began inspecting those 250,000 metadata records to see what terms appeared on them most frequently.

“Basically, we were fishing around,” says Connelly. “We were modeling our technology.”

Once they did the analysis, one word stuck out: *boulder*. It appeared on thousands of cards.

Connelly soon concluded that this was a reference to “Operation Boulder,” a Nixon-era program that involved spying on Arab-Americans and scrutinizing visa applicants with Arab-sounding names. Initiated after the killing of eleven Israeli athletes by Palestinians at the 1972 Munich Olympics, Operation Boulder was roundly denounced by national-security experts for being ineffectual at improving the nation’s security. It was disbanded by the State Department in 1975. Few details about the program had emerged since. But what little information had been released provided Connelly and his colleagues the clues they needed to recognize the documents’ subject. The cards that contained the word *boulder*, when looked at in the aggregate, were also rich with references to visa applications, for example.

“There’s no doubt that these missing files are about the Nixon program,” says Connelly. “We can tell by looking at documents that have been released about the program. They also tend to mention visas.”

Why would the government release some documents about Operation Boulder and keep others secret? The Columbia researchers can shed light on this, too. Their analysis shows

Could a computer’s guess about the content of a blacked-out passage be considered a leak? Would it matter if it guesses right or not?

that before 2002, documents about Operation Boulder often got released when they came up for review. And then, abruptly, in April of that year, hardly any such files were declassified. Is it possible that the Bush administration blocked these releases to avoid comparisons between the antiterrorism measures that it was pursuing at the time, such as its no-fly list, and Nixon’s failed policy?

“It’s not a smoking gun,” Connelly says, “but it’s suggestive, isn’t it?”

David Pozen, a Columbia law professor who is an expert on government secrecy, says that this floating of trial balloons, this dropping of hints, is a valuable contribution to scholarship in itself. He says that the Declassification Engine, by revealing what types of information the US government is keeping secret, is likely to encourage scholars, journalists, and citizens to file more public-

record requests. Furthermore, he says that the project’s discoveries could help people win these petitions.

“One of the challenges in getting information through FOIA is that you need to describe what you’re looking for in considerable detail,” he says. “If you can show that an agency is sitting on thousands of documents related to a particular topic, well, the government may find it much less politically feasible to reject you.”

All of it, not some of it

The Declassification Engine will soon provide its visitors access to more declassified US government documents than have ever been available in one place.

Many of the materials on its site have so far come from commercial vendors. These include a set of 117,000 records produced by various US departments and agencies from the 1940s to the present; this database, known as the Declassified Documents Reference System, is considered by scholars the most important of its type, based on the historical significance of its individual items. It is on loan to the Columbia researchers from the publishing company Gale.

In terms of sheer volume, though, the project’s most impressive acquisition is yet to come. The Internet Archive, a nonprofit digital library based in San Francisco that collects all manner of public-domain content, from books to music to court transcripts, has agreed to give the Declassification Engine access to tens of millions of federal documents that its employees have trawled from government websites. These files will be accessible on the project’s website later this year.

To keep the site growing, Connelly is also trying to create a sort of electronic catch basin for collecting documents as soon as the government releases them. One way he aims to do this is by collaborating with nonprofit organizations that have sprung up in recent years to help people file public-record requests. An organization called FOIA Machine, for instance, provides easy-to-use electronic submission forms and then tracks people’s requests for them; when the government meets a request, the materials come to an e-mail account hosted by FOIA Machine. Connelly is now working with the organization to get access to those files. He says that migrating the documents to the Declassification Engine will allow researchers to study them alongside other declassified records using sophisticated analytic tools for the first time. Only a tiny percentage of documents that are released under FOIA, he points out, ever wind up in databases on library or government websites.

“Often, the person who receives material from the government is the only one in the world who now has a digital version of those records,” he says. “That’s a waste. Why not bring them all together?”

Old bars and stripes

One of the tools now operating on the Declassification Engine is ideally suited to gleaning insights from this influx of fresh mate-



rial. Powered by software created by Columbia PhD candidate Alexander Rush, it can detect when multiple versions of the same document reside in the Declassification Engine's databases. Connelly says it is common for slightly different versions of the same record to be floating around, because the government will often release a document with lots of text blacked out and then put out a cleaner version, say, in response to a FOIA request, years later. He says researchers can gain insights into the political sensitivities of past US presidents by seeing what language was blacked out under their watch and subsequently restored by their successors.

"Sometimes it's the older, more heavily redacted version you're hunting for," Connelly says. "I've met historians who've spent years trying to track down all the versions that may exist of a particular memo."

Analyzing thousands of pairs of documents in this manner might also reveal political schisms within a sitting president's administration, say the Columbia researchers, because sometimes one federal agency, in response to a FOIA request, will release a more complete version of a document than will another agency in response to similar requests.

"A classic example of this occurred in the aftermath of the Abu Ghraib scandal, when the FBI was eager to show that it had had nothing to do with torture and so it released a lot of information showing that other agencies were responsible for it," says Connelly. "We hope that by analyzing huge numbers of documents,

we'll be able to identify the kinds of information that tend to get withheld by one or another agency, and thereby correct for the inherent bias in the public record."

Truth and consequences

Is Matthew Connelly the next Julian Assange?

That's a question he gets a lot. His answer is an emphatic "No." He and his colleagues are only gathering documents that have been publicly released. And they are careful not to reveal any information that would endanger US security. They say their goal is merely to highlight broad categories of information that the federal government is keeping classified.

"Everybody involved in this project appreciates that some information needs to remain secret," Connelly says. "On the other hand, lots of information is kept secret to avoid embarrassments, for political reasons, or simply because the government isn't investing properly in reviewing and declassifying old documents. We want to help the government to uphold its own secrecy laws."

That said, the data-mining technology that Connelly and his colleagues are developing could conceivably be adapted to generate statistically based guesses about what terms lie beneath redactions. And this is where things get tricky. Connelly described this possibility for a few journalists last spring. Their reports, appearing in *Wired*, the *New Yorker*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, and half a dozen other publications, posed riveting questions: Could

a computer's guess about the content of blacked-out passage be considered a leak? Would it matter if it guesses right or not?

Connelly and his colleagues have so far refrained from doing this kind of research while they evaluate its legal and ethical implications. They have formed a steering committee of historians, computer scientists, and national-security experts that will convene in January to help them decide whether to go ahead with it. If they did, Connelly says, they might rig the technology so that when it produces guesses about what lies beneath a redaction, it would exclude names of people and other highly sensitive types of information.

"The last thing we want to do is out the name of a CIA agent," Connelly says. "Our main goal, even with this kind of research, would be to discover what *types* of information are getting classified, and why."

But who is to say what information is safe to disclose? And might historians, by taking it upon themselves to decide this, inadvertently provoke the US government into releasing even less information so that they have fewer clues to work with?

It is conceivable that the US government will tighten its grip on classified information in response to Connelly's work, according to several Columbia professors. They worry that the Declassification Engine, by demonstrating a capacity for redaction cracking that US intelligence experts have long feared that foreign spies

would develop, might strengthen the hand of federal officials who are inclined to keep the lid on information.

"Those who advance a conservative approach to declassification could say, 'Look, now there's this small band of academics who are able to break down our redactions; can you imagine what others are capable of?'" says law professor David Pozen. "My concern would be that government officials might now say, 'OK, instead of releasing these documents with redactions, we just won't release them at all.'"

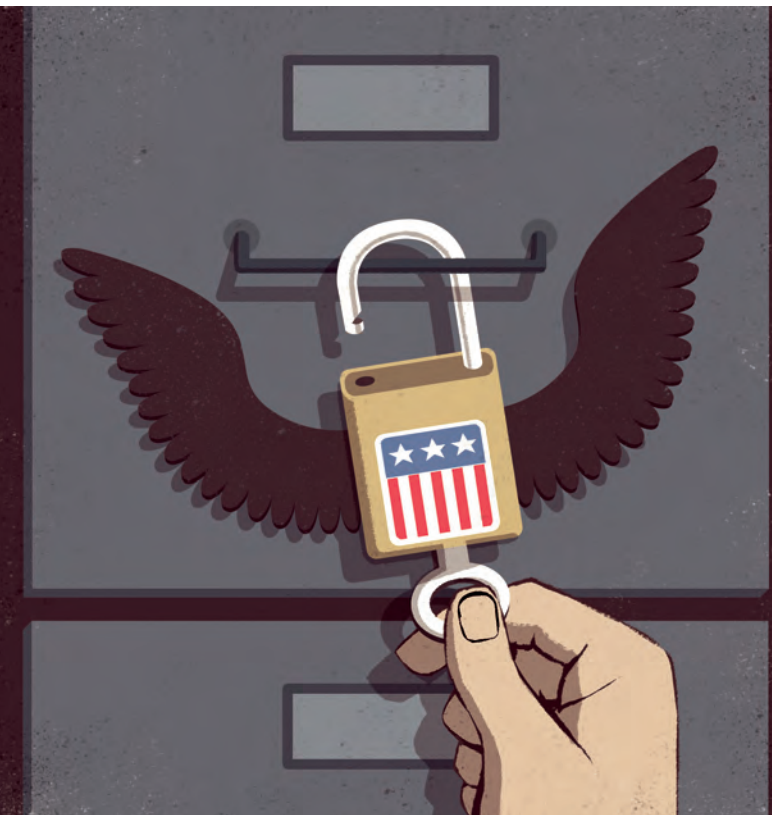
Yet these same Columbia experts say that the US government has for years been quietly taking steps to limit the information that it releases, specifically to frustrate any attempts to examine its records with data-mining techniques. One of the best things that could result from the Declassification Engine, they say, is that it will provoke debate about when it is justifiable to limit access to federal records as a way of offsetting this perceived risk. That this public conversation will take place soon seems inevitable. The analytic tools that Connelly and his colleagues are developing embody some of government censors' worst fears of data mining — fears that, according to these Columbia experts, likely contributed to the enormous backlog of declassified documents that inspired Connelly's work in the first place.

Removing clues

Pozen's own research has shown that the US government began fighting FOIA requests in court more aggressively in the early 2000s to avert the threat of computer-savvy spy craft. He has found that when FOIA cases go to court, Justice Department lawyers have often argued that documents that look innocuous in isolation ought to remain classified, because if they were to be analyzed in conjunction with a lot of other documents, vital secrets could be revealed. A hypothetical example goes like this: a document that references a café is released, and then is analyzed against another one that references a waiter, another a street, another a city, another an unnamed CIA informant, until, finally, a computer generates a list of people who could be that informant.

According to Pozen, this sort of hypothetical is plausible but is often treated by courts as a pretext for deferring to the government. "I don't think judges carefully weigh the validity of this argument in each case, and they often don't understand the technology that's involved," he says. "On top of this, they're generally inclined to err on the side of caution whenever national-security concerns get raised. The result is they've tended to side with the government whenever they hear this argument."

Pozen has argued in several papers that judges ought to take more time to consider these cases and push the government harder to justify why FOIA requests ought to be rejected on these grounds. But he says there has been little discussion of the issue among legal scholars or the judiciary so far. "It remains a pretty esoteric topic," he says. "Anything that drums up some discussion about it will be a benefit to the legal community."



Robert Jervis, a Columbia political-science professor who for the past ten years has chaired the Central Intelligence Agency's Historical Review Panel, a role in which he advises the agency on which of its classified materials ought to be prioritized for review and potential release, adds another twist to the story: he says that CIA officials worry that the Declassification Engine, by making available on its website huge numbers of federal documents that are drawn from disparate sources, could enable foreign spies or terrorist groups to conduct more powerful data-mining analyses of the nation's public record than they could otherwise. Jervis says it is partly to prevent enemies of the United States from data-mining old intelligence reports that the CIA's main digital repository for declassified documents, CREST, is not accessible on the Internet but only on computer terminals located at the National Archives in College Park — an inconvenience that has long irritated scholars.

The specter of data mining, Jervis says, could also cause some CIA officials to work more slowly while reviewing documents.

"These guys would love to have the budget that's necessary for reviewing all the documents that are before them carefully and getting them all out on time," Jervis says. "But they're not going to do anything that endangers an agent or his informants. So they're looking at this technology that's out there now, and they may say to themselves, 'We're going to have to work more scrupulously than ever.'"

Costs of complacency

On a recent Friday afternoon, Connelly sat behind his desk in Fay-erweather Hall, quietly observing a group of graduate students who had gathered to work in a lounge outside of his office. Some were historians, others computer scientists. It was impossible to tell who was who, based on their conversations, which flowed with references to Nixon, Kissinger, Saigon, mean probabilities, gap-time distributions, and applets.

"Twenty years from now, when historians are writing the story of our time, their archive is going to include Google and Facebook," Connelly remarked. "They're going to need to understand data-mining techniques to do that work. I'm trying to develop those tools."

It had been a busy day. Connelly was preparing for talks with representatives of several federal agencies, including the State Department and the National Security Agency. He planned to address any concerns they had about his research. He would also offer to demonstrate his team's analytic techniques in case the government had any interest in using them. Connelly had come away from previous conversations with federal officials convinced that the same tools his team is using to analyze the public record could help the government better manage its secrets. The government, too, is sifting through enormous numbers of documents and trying to make categorical assessments about their contents. In the government's case, this means determining which of the millions of classified documents that come up for review every year ought to be released, with or without redactions, and which ought to

remain locked up in drawers. Federal employees do this work by reading documents one at a time, page by page, using black felt pens to ink over sensitive passages. Connelly said that many officials he has spoken to believe this needs to change soon; in order to process the tidal wave of electronic records that are coming due for review in the next few years, the government will need to implement its own data-mining system. One strategy that Connelly and many others have advocated to the government, he says, would involve screening large numbers of documents for language that is associated with sensitive topics. Human censors could then inspect these documents carefully, while funneling the others straight into the public domain.

"We need a system that protects those secrets that are truly sensitive and releases the rest. Right now, neither of these goals is being accomplished."

—Matthew Connelly

"This would be a risk-management approach, and it would start from the position that it's impossible to catch everything, and that it's a mistake to try," Connelly says. "Time and time again government boards have proposed using technology in this way to make the declassification process more efficient."

That the US government would even consider releasing large numbers of sensitive documents, sight unseen, may sound surprising. Yet the current system may already be collapsing under its own weight. Connelly, echoing an argument that many experts on US secrecy have made, says that the rash of illegal leaks that the US government has experienced in recent years is partly a manifestation of a cynicism that has taken root about the government's perceived lack of transparency. When the government classifies too much information for too long, he says, the irony is that none of it is safe.

"What we need is a system that protects those secrets that are truly sensitive and releases the rest," he says. "Right now, neither of these goals is being accomplished. Technology has to be part of the solution."

Exactly how the Declassification Engine team could help the US government is unclear. Today, it is widely assumed by academics who study secrecy that the government must be pursuing its own data-mining research to speed the declassification process. It is also assumed that if this kind of research is taking place it is poorly funded, as most work related to declassification is perceived to be. It is hard to know for sure, though.

Why is that? Connelly pauses, and one can almost hear a drum roll. "The research is all classified." 🗝

Try out Connelly's Declassification Engine:
www.magazine.columbia.edu/connelly



TALES OF ONE



CITY

By Paul Hond



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On February 6, 1912, Seth Low 1870CC, the former president of Columbia and former mayor of New York, presided over a 350-guest dinner at Delmonico’s restaurant on Fifth Avenue. The occasion was the centenary of Charles Dickens’s birth. This pairing was consistent for Low. In 1901, as a mayoral candidate, he had campaigned with Mark Twain, who was often called “the American Dickens.” It was Dickens who moved Low to offer birthday benedictions at Delmonico’s, and Dickens who, a hundred years hence, would inspire another Columbia-educated New York mayor — one who, like Low, had roots in Brooklyn — supplying him with a campaign slogan that spanned more than just the centuries.

It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, and certainly it was the age of metaphors. “Let’s be honest about where we are today,” Bill de Blasio ’87SIPA said to the knot of reporters on hand for his campaign kickoff in Brooklyn last January 27. “This is a place that in too many ways has become a tale of two cities.” Thus a catch phrase, if not Victorian literature itself, entered the political mix of 2013. Though the metaphor

Bill de Blasio rallied the five boroughs with his message of two New Yorks. He wasn’t the first Columbian to bring the city together.

for income inequality wasn’t exactly congruent with the London–Paris reference of Dickens’s title, the repetition of “a tale of two cities” did evoke Dickensian social imagery, and de Blasio carried the theme straight through to election night.

His victory speech took place in Brooklyn’s Park Slope Armory, a nineteenth-century National Guard building whose long, vaulted drill hall, hangar-huge, now serves as the basketball-courts-and-track area of the local YMCA. In a city accustomed to having its candidates gather with supporters under the chandeliers of hotel ballrooms, this was an unusual setting: the metal bleachers and goldenrod floor emitted a distinctly informal, outer-borough flavor of rec leagues, Lions Clubs, and canned-food drives.

But, then, Bill de Blasio, the public advocate for the City of New York, was an unusual candidate. Unknown to most New Yorkers as recently as the summer, de Blasio and his tightly run ship gained current on July 10 after his arrest during a protest over the closure of Brooklyn’s Long Island College Hospital; caught a late-July zephyr stirred by the sinking of Anthony Weiner; and cruised full-sail ahead in August with the unfurling of a TV ad featuring his Afroed, Brooklyn-jacket-wearing fifteen-year-old son, Dante — establishing, in thirty seconds, the candidate’s bona fides on stop-and-frisk, public schools, boroughs not named Manhattan, race rela-

TALES OF ONE CITY

tions (his wife, Chirlane McCray, is African-American), and family values. A growing crew of supporters saw him breeze through the Democratic primary to become, astonishingly, the presumptive next mayor. And with each successive stop — the Children’s Aid Society in East Harlem to tout universal pre-K, with Bill (always “Bill,” even to these preschoolers) ducking into a classroom and regaling a dozen four-year-olds with a reading of the adoption-themed *My Family Is Forever* by Nancy Carlson (“Families are formed in different ways,” he began, “so they don’t always look alike”); the rally on behalf of \$7.35-an-hour fast-food workers in front of a Financial District Burger King (“This is an insupportable situation where everyday hard-working people can’t make ends meet”); the raucous, red-clad New York State Nurses Association powwow by City Hall (“I am committed to that outlandish notion you deserve a fair contract”) — with each appearance, they saw the candidate become, at no cost to his rolled-up-shirtsleeves affability, increasingly mayoral. They felt the peculiar crescendo of the inevitable, measured in the swelling crowds, the press and cameras, the men in dark suits and white earpieces, and the trails of excited passersby who pursued the candidate down sidewalks and across plazas to the waiting black SUV.

Of the dozen alumni of King’s College and Columbia who became mayor of New York, three in particular had a far-reaching impact on the city.

DeWitt Clinton 1786CC, who was the first graduate of Columbia College, became mayor in 1803. Clinton established the city’s public-school system, appointed the planners of its grid of streets and avenues, and later, as governor, fought for the construction of the Erie Canal. Then there was Abram Hewitt 1842CC, benefactor of Cooper Union and dedicator of the Brooklyn Bridge, who became mayor in 1886 and earned the title “father of New York underground rapid transit” for having pushed through a bill in the state legislature outlining plans for a subway system. And Seth Low? He spearheaded the consolidation of the twin cities of New York and Brooklyn and the territories of Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island into a single municipality in 1897, and became mayor of that metropolis five years later.

Now comes de Blasio, whose own Erie Canal-sized task may be to convince the state legislature and Governor Andrew Cuomo to raise the city income-tax rate from 3.88 percent to 4.41 percent for five years on New Yorkers making half a million dollars a year or more, in order to fund universal pre-K and after-school programs for all middle-school students. Might the tale of two cities come down to New York and Albany?

At 9:00 p.m., people file into the Park Slope Armory. The Other New York, you could call it, nothing hoity-toity, just swatches of the “gorgeous mosaic” celebrated a quarter century ago by David Dinkins, New York’s last Democratic mayor and now a professor

of public affairs at SIPA. A youthful core of enthusiastic, middle-class college graduates makes this reminiscent of a 2008 Obama rally, though with more Hasidim. The citizens fill the space in front of a platform that holds risers and a lectern posted with a campaign-red sign reading PROGRESS.

There are no balloons. No nail biting. The results are foregone, and the mood is one of postclimactic contentment. At 9:45 p.m., on a giant screen, de Blasio’s opponent, MTA chief Joe Lhota, who warned in a TV ad that a de Blasio victory would plunge the city into a montage of 1970s graffiti and overturned squad cars, concedes defeat. Two thousand partisans in the Park Slope Armory cheer. The music picks up, signaling hipness and optimism: Florence and the Machine’s “Dog Days Are Over,” Fun’s “We Are Young,” and U2’s “Beautiful Day.”

As people wait for the mayor-elect, some reflect on what motivated their support for de Blasio.

“Definitely stop-and-frisk,” says Lennox, sixty-four, a transit worker from the Bronx. “That’s number one. Two: housing. Don’t turn hospitals into luxury apartments. Three: homelessness has reached record numbers. It’s covered up, but it’s very bad.” Herbert Block ’87CC, the assistant executive vice president of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, says, “I knew Bill at SIPA, and he’s just the same smart, compassionate guy he was in his student days. He’ll be a mayor who is interested in the whole city.” “This is a unique opportunity to push Dems to the left,”

Bill de Blasio and his wife, Chirlane McCray, on the campaign trail in August.



says Aisha Keller, twenty-six, an organizer at the American Federation of Teachers. “Dems are bullied in New York and feel they have to move to the center. We need someone to push the Dems to the left.” “I don’t trust politicians,” says Sofia, who is every inch a journalist from France. “If he does 10 percent of what he promises, then it would be nice.” Democratic congressman Jerrold Nadler ’69CC says, “It’s going to be a major change — a progressive mayor. I’m looking for a change in stop-and-frisk and in fiscal priorities. He wants to fund universal pre-K, and I think he’s got a good shot of getting it through Albany.”

“De Blasio has run a brilliant campaign,” said Ester Fuchs, a professor of public affairs and political science at SIPA, a week before the election. “He is the only candidate who has a vision and a very clear message, which is about income inequality and affordability. His messages are clean and simple, and they’ve resonated with the public.”

“That feeling of a few doing very well, while so many slip further behind — that is the defining challenge of our time.”

While even a detractor might have expected that de Blasio, the erstwhile political operative who managed Hillary Clinton’s successful Senate run in 2000, should himself have a well-ordered campaign, Fuchs believes that “smart Bill de Blasio, who is not just substantively smart but politically and strategically smart, understands that campaigns and governing are very different activities.” Nor does Fuchs, who served as a special adviser on governance and strategic planning for Mayor Michael Bloomberg, worry that the candidate who ran as the anti-Bloomberg will undo any positive legacies. “I don’t expect that at all,” she said. “Bill understands what’s working, and in the general-election campaign, you saw him inching toward a more centrist position. On stop-and-frisk, he’s saying, ‘I’m not eliminating it, I just want to fix it.’ When he talks about charter schools, he now says that only the charters that have a lot of money should pay for co-location, not that every charter should pay rent in a public-school building. What he would say is that he further refined his position. Which I think is correct: that’s what he did. But he’s refining it, in my view, in the right direction for when he has to govern.”

The de Blasio–McCray quartet, so recognizable that a supporter’s T-shirt portrays the family in silhouette crossing Abbey Road (capturing the distinctive variations in height and hairstyles), enters at 10:03 p.m., waving and smiling. McCray, in a matador-red dress, steps to the lectern, looking overjoyed. Someone yells, “First Lady!” Big cheers. It’s McCray’s night, too.

She says, “When I first met Bill I could tell he was smart. And I like smart.” That was in 1991, when they were both aides to Mayor Dinkins, and McCray was identifying as a lesbian. They discovered they were soulmates and decided to see where it went. Far, it turned out. “Bill is strong enough to fight for what’s right,” McCray tells the crowd, and then she introduces the next mayor of New York.

De Blasio, with his wife, son, and rose-crowned college-sophomore daughter, Chiara, standing with him, thanks his troops, points out that the real work is just beginning, speaks a little Spanish, declares his pride in his children, gives a *grazie a tutti* to his ancestral hometowns of Grassano and Sant’Agata de’ Goti, mentions taking a phone call earlier from Joe Lhota, vows to work to earn the trust of those who didn’t vote for him, and arrives, right on schedule, at his central theme.

“I’ve spoken often about a tale of two cities,” he says. “That inequality — that feeling of a few doing very well, while so many slip further behind — that is the defining challenge of our time.” It is a speech, and a setting, with geography at its heart. “The best and the brightest are born in every neighborhood,” de Blasio says. “We all have a shared responsibility and a shared stake in making sure their destiny is defined by how hard they work and how big they dream, and not by their ZIP Code.”

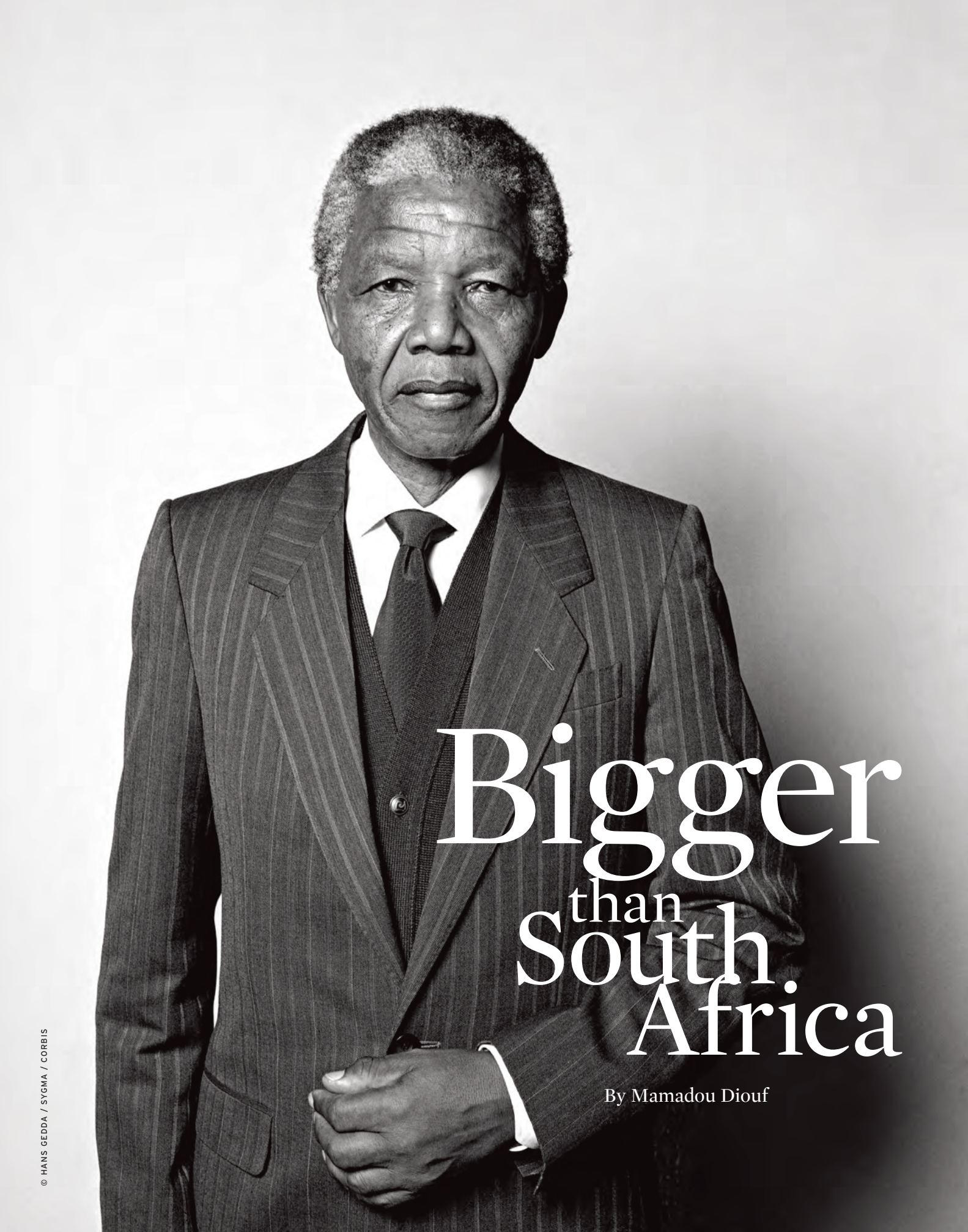
It was the biggest crowd ever convened in the two cities.

On May 24, 1883, tens of thousands of people lined the streets and packed the rooftops on both shores to watch the procession of dignitaries and military regiments make the historic crossing. The river was clogged with bunting-draped vessels, whose sails passed whispering under the miraculous span strung high between the two granite towers by a necklace of cables. On the other side, the Brooklyn side, in the railway depot, Mayor Seth Low stood before an assembly that included President Chester A. Arthur, Governor Grover Cleveland, New York mayor Franklin Edson, and industrialist Abram Hewitt. “At either end of the bridge lies a great city — cities full of vigorous life,” Low said. “The activities and the energies of each flow over into the other.” The speaker, known as “the boy mayor,” was thirty-three years old. “Fourteen years ago,” he said, “a city of four hundred thousand people on this side of the river heard of a projected suspension bridge with incredulity. The span was so long, the height so great, and the enterprise likely to be so costly, that few thought of it as something begun in earnest.”

Low was mayor of Brooklyn then. And for one November night in 2013, inside the castle-like outer walls of the Park Slope Armory, with his own great enterprise at hand, so was Bill de Blasio.

Nonetheless, the new mayor, like Low before him, was in a consolidating state of mind.

“Make no mistake,” de Blasio told New Yorkers on election night. “The people of this city have chosen a progressive path, and tonight we set forth on it, together, as one city.” 🏛



Bigger than South Africa

By Mamadou Diouf

It always seems impossible until it is done.

— Nelson Mandela

The legacy of Nelson Mandela will be with us for decades to come. The reasons are linked to his own history, to the way he understood power, and to the way he led his long-divided country. This is a man who lived under apartheid, a man who had been locked up for twenty-seven years. Of course, he did not solve all the problems South Africa faced, but Mandela is also bigger than South Africa. He's bigger than the continent. His legacy is a legacy for all humanity to honor.

This is a man who came out of jail and was ready to talk to the people who jailed him. He was ready — because he was mostly a man of the 1960s, an era defined by radicalism, and you see this driving the charter of the African National Congress. Out of jail, he was able to adjust to a completely new moment — adjust as an individual, but also as a politician. And while most people predicted bloodshed, Mandela single-handedly ensured that South Africa would not go through a racial civil war; that a space was open for negotiation; that a space was open for compromise; that a space was open to invent a new world.

Mandela was behind the idea that it was possible to invent a new world. That it was possible to turn enemies not into friends, but into partners. That it was possible to pull together different memories and multiple heritages to avoid the tensions and confrontations of a history of segregation, violence, and systematic spoliation. Insisting strongly on not forgetting, he advocated forgiveness. He believed that it was possible to reinvent South Africa. A new and ideal South Africa. He kept saying that South Africa was a complex country, and that reconciliation was the only appropriate response to the challenge the country was facing — the only way things should be done.

The second element, probably the most important of his legacy, is that this man decided to serve one term and leave

office. This was a revolution in Africa. He could have stayed until his death. Because he was already a myth. The message he conveyed was a powerful message. By stepping down — the universally recognized hero, probably the only one Africans agreed on — he showed that he didn't believe in the notion of the charismatic leader, a messiah destined to eternally lead his people. It was also a sign of respect for ordinary citizens. A lesson of humility and dedication to the cause of democracy and justice. Even when he left power, he remained the person to go to in a moment of crisis, the person to go to when you needed advice, the person to go to when you needed voice to mobilize. Mandela's is a very powerful voice, but it's the voice of a democratic politician, of an icon who behaves like an ordinary citizen. It's the voice of a man who was able to say, at a point, "I have been too long in jail. I have done what I had to do to help the transition. Now I'm too old to remain president. I have to pass the baton to a new generation."

He did a great job passing the baton, never commenting on what was going on in the new government, but still staying on the stage, working through the Nelson Mandela Foundation to address social issues in and beyond South Africa and Africa, becoming universally acclaimed as the most important world leader from the mid-twentieth century to the present.

The third element, which seems very trivial but is very important, is that he decided to drop his suits and ties — the formal uniform of the president — and to wear his colorful shirts. It signaled a return to the state of an ordinary citizen of the world, a return home to live his life as an ordinary man. After working for the future of a nation, after setting the foundation of the future of South Africa, he decided to revisit his past and rediscover a life he hadn't lived. After the long march to freedom, he began a long march back to all he had missed because of the struggle to free South Africa — the twenty-seven years in jail and the challenges of the transition from apartheid to the rainbow nation.

Politically, of course, we can discuss some of the choices he made. But something that will remain with us, and remain with history, is not only the way he ensured a peaceful transition in a context of violence, but also the way he left power — and held himself as a powerful, wise man. 🙏

Watch video of Diouf's reflections on Mandela, from which this essay is adapted, at www.magazine.columbia.edu/mandela.

Mamadou Diouf,
director of the
Institute of
African Studies
at Columbia,
remembers
Nelson Mandela —
and tells us why
the world will, too.



Manmeet Kaur
and Prabhjot Singh
made a commitment
to serving their
community. Despite
enduring a terrifying
act of violence, they
haven't broken it.

The Wages of Health

By Paul Hond

When Manmeet Kaur and Prabhjot Singh moved into East Harlem in 2010, the health crisis there had long been dire.

Seven years earlier, the *Journal of General Internal Medicine* published an article stating, “The toll diabetes takes on residents of communities of color, such as East Harlem, is staggering . . . Hospitalizations among persons 65 years and older for diabetes-related amputations in this neighborhood are nearly 5 times those for NYC overall.” In 2007, the New York State Health Foundation reported that East Harlem residents are hospitalized for diabetes at a rate ten times that of people on the Upper East Side. In 2006, N. R. Kleinfield of the *New York Times*, covering diabetes in East Harlem, wrote of “the human behavior that makes dealing with Type 2” — the common form of diabetes, in which the body cannot produce enough insulin to maintain a normal blood-sugar level — “often feel so futile — the force of habit, the failure of will, the shrugging defeatism, the urge to salve a hard life by surrendering to small comforts: a piece of cake, a couple of beers, a day off from sticking oneself with needles.”

Despite this attention, the problem only worsened. ‘DIABETES EPIDEMIC’ DECLARED AS NEW YORK CITY DEATHS TIED TO THE DISEASE HIT ALL-TIME HIGH, ran a New York *Daily News* headline in June 2013. Around the same time, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene found that 667,000 New Yorkers have diabetes — a 33 percent increase from a decade ago. And East Harlem (population 108,000), half Latino, a third African-American, with an influx of professionals, mostly white, filling the new residential buildings — a neighborhood of high obesity rates and gang activity, where 38 percent of residents live

below the poverty line — is New York’s diabetes epicenter: as many as one in five people here has the disease.

For Kaur ’02BC, ’12BUS and Singh, a SIPA professor, this quiet catastrophe points up a fatal failure in the US health-care system. It also presents a bold opportunity.

Two women from East Harlem sit facing each other inside a large room with a mirrored wall in a Mount Sinai Medical Center clinic on East 94th Street.

“I had a horrible day,” says the younger woman. “Half the day I was feeling drowsy, irritable, dizzy, confused. I don’t like to check my glucose but once a day, so I didn’t even check it after that.”

“You know that when the doctor prescribes your insulin,” says the older woman, her voice gentle and firm, “he prescribes for you to take it just before you eat.”

A sigh. “I know, but sometimes I get thrown off schedule.”

“Yeah, I understand. We all get busy, and life doesn’t wait for us. But be careful, because there can be a lot of side effects, like you felt last night.”

At a long table, a small group of community-health workers, called coaches, observe the two women, who are also coaches. Led by nutritionist and diabetes educator Jamillah Hoy-Rosas, the coaches are rehearsing for the real-life encounters awaiting them outside.

“I don’t wanna feel like that no more,” says the younger woman. “Is it because I doubled up?”

“Yes, it’s because you doubled up. Then you didn’t eat. When you double up on your insulin you’re gonna feel bad, and it could be dangerous.”

Photographs by Jörg Meyer

Hoy-Rosas takes notes. She's the clinical care manager for City Health Works, a nonprofit community-health organization started by Manmeet Kaur. Prabhjot Singh is the lead adviser. Last September, in the shadows of the impending government shutdown over opposition in Congress to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), City Health Works began a pilot project to demonstrate its approach.

It's October now. As the shutdown enters its second week, the machinery of health reform cranks forward. The ACA has accelerated a fundamental shift in financial incentives, supporting innovations in payment and delivery that reward quality of care over quantity.

"Traditionally, doctors and hospitals have been paid on a fee-for-service basis," explains Kaur, thirty, seated in the City Health Works office at the East 94th Street clinic. "The insurer pays the doctor or clinic for each visit, each test, each screening. But the fee-for-service structure hasn't improved outcomes or controlled costs." The office has peach walls, filing cabinets, carrels, nutrition posters. "Hospitals have never been incentivized to care about wellness and prevent illness," Kaur says. "They profit if you're sicker." She chuckles. "This is at the heart of why the system is so perverse."

At City Health Works, Kaur and Singh have zeroed in on a critical gap in the health-care system: a lack of access to primary care in low-income areas. This gap has always been a reality for patients, but now, for the first time, doctors and hospitals are feeling the financial effects.

"Health reform is saying, We're not going to pay for all these people that are bouncing back over and over again," says Singh, thirty-one. He notes that the fee-for-service model is being replaced by strategies like global payments, in which hospitals manage the risks of all of their patients with lump sums: if they do it for less, they save money; if they do it for more, they lose money. "So there's a massive incentive," he says, "to build this community-health infrastructure."

Singh is the director of systems design at Columbia's Earth Institute and teaches a course on global health practice at SIPA. He is also a physician at Mount Sinai Medical Center and co-chair of the One Million Community Health Workers campaign, an Earth Institute-based initiative of the African Union and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network. (The goal: one million health workers for sub-Saharan Africa by 2015.) He wears a burgundy turban, a long, black beard, a forest-green pullover, and designer jeans.

"Three or four years ago, the attitude of the New York health systems was, We don't want to deal with community health. It's such a money loser in this fee-for-service system," Singh says. "That flipped immediately" — he snaps his fingers — "when health reform kicked in. Now there was a thirty-day readmission penalty: if patients came back before thirty days and you treated them, you wouldn't get new money. Suddenly, doctors said, We'd better build a system to take care of people for thirty-one days.

"But what about the rest of the year? Why not make a system that takes care of people for 365 days, and not have them just come in and out of the hospital?"

"There's a need," says Kaur, "for a much more intensive community-based layer of the health-care system. Behavior changes are complicated. Socioeconomic factors that cause stress and influence health cannot be solved in a doctor's appointment."

Singh can attest. "As a primary-care physician, I know that in my fifteen-minute visit with a patient, I'm not equipped to give life coaching. And I'm not the guy to do it. So we've hired residents of East Harlem who are gifted motivators, trained in motivational interviewing techniques, who help people set goals around diabetes care, around living a healthier life."

For the moment, the coaches are paid for with grant money from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and a service fee from Mount Sinai, New York's largest private-hospital system. Kaur and Singh are working with insurance companies so that, over time, insurers will join the hospitals in financing the coaches.

"Our goal for this pilot," says Singh, "is to get sustainable payments so that we know the pricing for the system. We're figuring out all the connections, all the costs." Singh and Kaur believe that their model will lower expenses for everyone: patients, hospitals, clinics, and insurers. "As that happens," Singh says, "then this can spread."

It's about a thirty-minute walk from City Health Works to the high-rise condo at Fifth Avenue and East 120th Street. That path, which traverses the lower half of East Harlem, is checkered with fast-food joints, tenement walkups, and columns of the stark, huddled red-brick towers of the New York City Housing Authority.

Crossing East 96th at Third Avenue on a Friday afternoon, you pass the Mecca-facing domed mosque of the Islamic Cultural Center of New York, toward whose open doors flows a stream of men and boys in caps and tunics. Outside the gates, a South Asian woman in a



dark-blue hijab stands behind a curbside table that holds containers of chicken curry, telling a health-curious customer that meat is a necessity, which prompts a bearded, taqiyah-wearing man to suggest, in a barrio accent, that vegetarianism and bottled water are the way to go (he's not there yet himself). Three blocks north, a food stamp-friendly greenmarket offers broccoli (\$1.50/lb.), collard greens, snap peas, turnips, kale. Three elderly Puerto Rican women watch a stir-frying demo at an adjacent booth (broccoli and parsnips, olive oil, low-sodium soy sauce). The market, open on Fridays from April to November, is run by Harvest Home, a nutrition-minded nonprofit that receives support from EmblemHealth, New York's largest private health insurer. EmblemHealth's purple-on-white emblem is conspicuous here, and vans bearing the logos of other insurers cruise the area, competing for customers. So it makes a kind of thematic sense that when you turn and look west on East 99th Street, you see, half a mile away on Madison Avenue, looming like an obsidian monolith in a fantasy novel, the 434-foot black edifice of Mount Sinai Medical Center.

On Third Avenue, meanwhile, the food plot thickens: we have, clotted together, McDonald's, Little Caesar's, KFC, Burger King, Taco Bell, Dunkin' Donuts, and, in a few groceries, modest arrays of apples and fresh vegetables that can't shout like the playroom reds and yellows of the busy fast-food chains that saturate the diabetes epicenter of New York. Turn left at 110th (Tito Puente Way), walk under the elevated train at Park Avenue, past the Lehman Village Houses to the traffic circle at Fifth Avenue, where the future home of the New Africa Center rises above the northeast corner of Central Park. Below, in the autumn-mellow park, on a green-skinned lake, brown ducks paddle with their bills open, munching the algae-colored, protein-rich duckweed. This is where East 110th Street becomes Central Park North.

If you turn right on Fifth Avenue, you'll pass the Harlem Academy; the Martin Luther King Jr. Towers; the fire-engine-red garage doors of Engine 58/Ladder 26, where a banner reads, *Proud home of FF Mike Corrigan, currently on active military duty with the US Army in Afghanistan. Freedom is not Free*; and low-rise residential buildings and storefront churches that march up to the schist outcropping at 120th Street, which marks Marcus Garvey Park (called, before 1973, Mount Morris Park, the name preferred by today's realtors).

Kaur and Singh live across from Marcus Garvey Park with their one-year-old son, Hukam. They have lived there for three years.

"I hear it every day," says Leny Rivera, a Honduran-born New Yorker who lives on East 109th Street. "Neighbors talking about struggling with diabetes."

Rivera was the first coach hired by City Health Works. Like the newer trainees, she has learned a counseling technique called motivational interviewing, in which, Kaur says, "you don't tell people what to do, but guide them into identifying their motivation and their sources of ambivalence."

"The biggest challenge," says Rivera, "is food. Our parents raised us on certain foods, and we got accustomed. The members"

— members being the term for people in the City Health Works network — "are mostly Puerto Rican and Mexican. They eat a lot of deep-fried foods. So instead of cutting things out entirely, we minimize: try it for a week and see how you feel. We've had some success, but it goes back and forth."

Once a week, Rivera walks to the food pantry at Madison Avenue and East 109th to meet with members one-on-one. She has six members, all diabetic, all older, all from the neighborhood.

"You hear a lot of life stories," she says. "People don't have a lot of support. Low income. No insurance. They're not being treated and have nowhere to go. When they hear about a program to help them, they are very grateful."

Rivera emphasizes diet and physical activity, and encourages members with untreated ailments to see a doctor before the problems get bigger and more expensive.

"Hospitals have never been incentivized to care about wellness and prevent illness," Kaur says. "They profit if you're sicker."

Singh puts it this way: "You go to the doctor one day out of the year. Where's the health-care system for 99 percent of your life? That's what's missing, and that's what we're feeling. Clinical care accounts for only 20 percent of health outcomes. Thirty percent comes from health behaviors, 40 percent from your socioeconomic circumstances, and 10 percent from your physical environment. Yet we spend trillions on that first 20 percent. We've bet the farm on this hospital-heavy model. It's like a sinkhole: you have to get bad enough to warrant medical care. But the time between when you feel a symptom and when you get really sick can be pretty long. And you're kind of left to the wolves."

This, says Singh, is where we can learn from other systems — for instance, the notion that entrusted people from neighborhoods can play an important role in people's health, as he found in sub-Saharan Africa. There, community-health workers, strongly supervised and equipped with mobile phones, deliver items like antimalarial and antidiarrheal treatments.

"At a time in the US when we're worried about costs," says Singh, "when we're not delivering high-quality care, when we're not reaching vulnerable populations, there's much we can learn from those systems abroad, and bring it to places like Harlem."

On Saturday, September 21, 2013, members of the Somalia-based Islamist group al-Shabaab carried out an assault-rifle attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya.

For Prabhjot Singh, this was no far-flung event. He had spent his early childhood in Nairobi, part of a relatively prosperous and cohesive Indian community of 70,000 that, between the British

colonizers and the black African majority, had always lived a little uneasily in Kenya. Singh had been busy that day finding out if his relatives, who lived minutes from Westgate, were OK. They were.

That evening, in New York, at sundown, Singh and a friend took an after-dinner stroll along Central Park North. Minutes earlier, Singh had dropped off his wife and son at home. Now, walking on the park side of the street, he approached the T-intersection at Malcolm X Boulevard, with the park on his left and Central Harlem fanning out to his right. It was a mild night; people were about; Singh saw a family walking ahead of him.

“Osama!” came a voice from behind. “Terrorist!”

A hand grabbed Singh’s beard. A fist caught his jaw. Singh stumbled and ran.

He ran, and behind him he saw bicycles. Fifteen or twenty bicycles, ridden by what looked like teenagers. “Osama!” “Get him!”

The bikes quickly overtook Singh. More fists flew at him. Singh fell to the ground, and was surrounded.

Manmeet Kaur had just returned to New York after three years abroad on a human-rights fellowship when a friend invited her to a party. Her name was Manmeet Kaur Bindra then.

It was August 2008. At the party, her friend introduced her to a brilliant young Cornell medical student who was getting his PhD in neural and genetic systems at Rockefeller University and working with the Columbia economist Jeffrey Sachs on the health-care component of Sachs’s antipoverty Millennium Villages Project. Days earlier, as part of a new spiritual commitment, he had stopped trimming his beard.

Kaur was familiar with that practice. Her grandfather was a famous Sikh scholar in India, at Panjab University. She was devoted to him. Though she grew up in Baldwin, on Long Island, she got to visit her grandfather several times in India and in America. His name was Harnam Singh Shan. All baptized men in the Sikh faith take the name Singh, meaning “lion.” Baptized women take the name Kaur, which means “princess.” Though Kaur was secular at the time, she and Prabhjot Singh were strikingly well-matched.

Here she was, the daughter of Sikh Indian immigrants, preoccupied with labor issues at an early age, having worked weekends and summers in her parents’ dry-cleaning shop. There, she got to know the immigrant workers, listening to their stories about crossing the border. As a child worker, she gained further insights. By high school she wanted to be a human-rights lawyer.

She earned a degree in anthropology and history from Barnard, where she won a Third Millennium Foundation human-rights fellowship that began after graduation. Her first stop on the fellowship was South Africa, where she worked with, and was inspired by, Mamelani Projects, a community-health group whose outreach method took into account factors like the patient’s employment situation and home life. For the fellowship’s second half, she went to India and eventually got involved with LabourNet, a social enterprise in Bangalore that func-

tioned as an intermediary between construction workers and employers. The idea was to improve worker standards, not through the labor-union method of negotiating contracts (the construction industry in India is around 80 percent informal), but by educating workers in health and finance and helping them get insurance that would move with them from job to job.

These experiences gave Kaur a sense that, when it came to implementing better living standards for people, the power of the law was limited. What she really wanted now was to create programs that could change whole systems.

And here *he* was: Singh, too, was a systems person. A systems scientist. He, too, was raised in a casually practicing Sikh household. He left Kenya at age eight, when his father, amid growing violence against Indians, moved the family from Nairobi to East Lansing, to do his postdoc at Michigan State. Afterward, the family migrated to Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where Singh — Prabhjot Singh Dhaddialla then — finished high school. Since 2005, he’d been going to rural parts of sub-Saharan Africa and India, learning how people living in severe poverty built their own health networks and delivered care.

He, too, wanted to change whole systems. Build better ones.

“Would you like to meet for lunch?” Singh said.

Kaur and Singh met for lunch. Ten weeks later, they were engaged.

They got married in October 2009. Kaur embraced Sikhism, dropping her last name, Bindra, just as Singh had dropped Dhaddialla. She began working for the Earth Institute, traveling to East and West Africa to consult on the financing and management strat-

“Why not make a system that takes care of people for 365 days,” Singh says, “and not have them just come in and out of the hospital?”

egies of the Millennium Villages project’s health-care workforce, both at the community-health level and in village clinics.

It was then that she began thinking about starting a community-health program in New York. What she needed was some business knowledge. A business *plan*. She applied to Columbia Business School, and got in.

On the evening of September 21, Kaur came home from dinner and got her baby ready for bed.

This was an exceedingly busy time for Kaur. The pilot project had started just days before, the culmination of three years of planning and fundraising, during which Kaur had taken time off to give birth to Hukam. After she returned from maternity leave, in December 2012, she hired a director of operations, Donya Williams, then spent the first quarter of 2013 cultivating relationships she had begun in B-school. It was back then, through her classes in the Social Enterprise Program, that she had gone into the neigh-



borhood to meet people from community organizations, schools, food pantries, and churches. She'd wanted to know: was there a need in East Harlem for a program that hired and trained people from the community to coach their peers to prevent and manage chronic diseases? Kaur had found that there was.

Through the Entrepreneurial Greenhouse Program at the B-school, she met with philanthropies, making the case that high-risk patients, and especially those with chronic conditions, rarely saw doctors or knew how to manage their own ailments. She had a plan to change that.

Two major funders came through: the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Robin Hood Foundation. Then Mount Sinai offered a service contract, paying City Health Works \$100,000 for 2013, with \$120,000 allotted for 2014. Now, the nonprofit had to prove itself.

As Kaur set Hukam in his crib, her phone rang. The caller, she saw, was her husband's walking companion. She answered.

The friend was calling from the street on Central Park North. He told Kaur that Singh had been attacked by a large group of young men on bikes. The youths punched him, knocked him down, and kicked him repeatedly. Thankfully, some passersby — an elderly man, a nurse from St. Luke's, and one or two others — intervened, scattering the assailants and preventing a bad situation from getting far worse.

Kaur was frightened, worried. But she wasn't shocked. Singh had been assaulted in 2003 and 2005, though not as badly. The possibility of violence was a daily fact.

Kaur's worries only grew when she looked down at Hukam. In a few years, he, too, would have a turban on his head. Every Sikh man Kaur knew had been bullied, harassed, intimidated. What kind of world awaited her son?

She got a babysitter and rushed to the emergency room at Mount Sinai, where Singh lay on a bed, bruised and bloodied. His jaw was fractured, his teeth knocked loose. Kaur held her husband's hand.

The next morning, Kaur and Singh rented a car and drove up to Albany, where Kaur had a family friend who was a maxillofacial surgeon. Singh's teeth needed to be stabilized. It was only by a family connection that Singh was able to receive, on a Sunday, immediate, first-rate care.

That same day, Simran Jeet Singh, a PhD candidate in Columbia's Department of Religion and a close friend of Prabhjot Singh, wrote a piece for the *Huffington Post* titled "Hate Hits Home." In it, he described what had happened to Prabhjot — and what had happened to thousands of Sikhs across the country since September 11, 2001. Prabhjot Singh, a wire in his jaw, was hardly alone.

Simran Singh's article circulated fast. As Kaur and Singh drove back home from Albany on Monday, the phone calls started. Media requests. Reporters in the lobby. Cameras.

The attention was intense and new for the young couple. But there was no question about how they would handle it.

The convergence of social elements — Sikh doctor/Ivy League professor is attacked in Harlem by a group of African-American teens shouting "Osama!" — offered news outlets from New York



to Delhi any number of story lines. Some found it poignant that Prabhjot Singh and Simran Jeet Singh had, a year earlier, coauthored an op-ed in the *New York Times* called “How Hate Gets Counted,” in response to the August 2012 handgun attack on a suburban Milwaukee temple that left six Sikhs dead before the white-supremacist shooter turned the gun on himself. Singh and Singh argued that the tendency of law enforcement and the media to portray the numerous attacks on Sikhs as cases of mistaken identity intended for Muslims ignored the history of violence against American Sikhs over the past hundred years. They called on the FBI to begin tracking anti-Sikh violence.

Now, a year later, Prabhjot Singh spoke out again, this time in the September 24 edition of the *Daily News*. “Even more important to me than my attackers’ being caught is that they are taught,” he wrote. “My tradition teaches me to value justice and accountability, and it also teaches me love, compassion, and understanding. This

“If someone went through this and feels angry or upset,” says Singh, “I would never rob that person of his or her authentic emotions.”

incident, while unfortunate, can help initiate a local conversation to create greater understanding within the community.”

Kaur added her perspective on the news website the *Daily Beast*: “In the Sikh spirit of *chardi Kala* (joyous spirit), and as the mother of our one-year-old boy, I want to work with our neighbors, local and global, to help create an environment in which our son has nothing to fear. My husband and I both live and work in Harlem and have devoted our careers to addressing conditions of poverty that are often drivers behind sad events like this.”

These responses brought fresh attention to Singh as the enlightened doctor who, in the face of hatred and violence, had sounded a healing note.

A week after the attack, Singh came downstairs from his apartment to meet a reporter. He was still in pain, but recovering. In the

lobby, the concierge, an offensive-tackle-sized Latino man, seeing Singh for the first time since the incident, approached him with open arms and an expression of regret-filled sympathy.

“Dr. Singh,” he said, and drew the frail-looking physician into an embrace. “I’m so sorry for what happened. I got your back, Dr. Singh. I got you.”

“Thank you,” said Singh. “Thank you.”

“I apologize for those kids. If I had been there —” The concierge broke off.

“It’s OK,” said Singh.

Later, upstairs, seated on an orange couch in a sunny, white-walled room, Singh cleared up a misconception about his religion that had been swirling since his statements.

“On a public basis, there has been a strong emphasis on the peaceful orientation of Sikhism,” he said. “Although that’s foundational, an important part of Sikhism is that, in order to keep peace and pursue justice and equality for all — not just for Sikhs, but for humanity — it is crucial to engage in appropriate force when necessary.

“Sikhs have had a long military history of serving with the British, with the Allies in World War II, their own resistance in the 1500s against the Mughal armies, and of defending Hindus from mass Islamic conversions in India. This is part of an oral tradition that we grow up with: how to comport yourself in times of duress in an ethical manner.”

Singh stressed that his own response shouldn’t necessarily be a model for others who have endured such an event.

“If someone went through this and feels angry or upset, I would never rob that person of his or her authentic emotions. If you’re upset and you’re hurt and you haven’t had time to process it, I would not, as a physician, say, Pull up a smile and get out there.

“The difference with us is that we are so embedded here. And we’re fortunate to be part of such incredible resources that allow me to feel that I can do something, that there’s a meaningful way forward. There is no need for me to rattle my saber simply because I can. Rather, I have to think about the fact that I’m going to be



working in the same place, with the same people. So it's not just a moment of errant generosity. It's that we have a lot of work to do and we are doing it."

The two coaches in the clinic finish their role-playing exercise. At the long table, Hoy-Rosas and the other coaches praise the older woman on her empathy and confidence. Hoy-Rosas then offers a critique.

"What I'd really liked to have seen here," she says, "is some discussion of how the member was feeling, because the symptoms she had are basically hypoglycemia. Her sugar's going to be low. I'd like to have seen encouragement for her to check her blood sugar the next time something like that happens, and a little education around what to do: 'If that happens again, it'd be great if you checked your blood sugar. And if your sugar is lower than seventy, take a one-carb snack.' That's a teachable moment right there. She did something she shouldn't have done, she had a negative consequence: that's a *beautiful* teachable moment. We don't want to miss those."

"The essential building blocks of Sikhism are oneness and love," says Simran Jeet Singh, the PhD candidate in religion, who was born in San Antonio and earned his master's degree at Harvard. "Every action that a Sikh takes is inspired by love and the intention of creating unity in the world."

Singh names the three core precepts of the religion: Naam Japna (remember the divine), Vand Chakna (share your gifts), and Kirat Karna (live ethically and work honestly), saying, "The Sikh religion places emphasis on spiritual development and social contribution. We're taught that loving worship is expressed through service, and Sikhs constantly try to integrate service into their professional work."

Sikhism is a monotheistic, egalitarian religion (the assigning of "Singh" and "Kaur" was meant to erase the caste signifiers encoded in surnames), founded by Guru Nanak around the year 1500 in the Punjab. Nanak decried the conflict between Hindus and Muslims, and preached a message of equality and unity, gaining followers called *sikhs*, or disciples.

"Guru Nanak set the precedent for how to live our lives," says Simran Singh. "He constantly served those around him, and focused espe-

cially on serving people in need. Sikhs have long developed institutions that help underprivileged communities with all types of basic necessities, from food and shelter to education and medical attention."

There are twenty-five million Sikhs worldwide, mostly in the Punjab, and about 500,000 in the US. As Prabhjot Singh points out, "99.9 percent of people with beards and turbans in America are Sikhs."

"It was an uninviting block, treeless and barren, lined with soot-colored walk-ups that cast heavy shadows for most of the day," wrote a future US president in his 1995 memoir, *Dreams from My Father*.

That description of East 94th Street between First and Second Avenue mostly holds, save for the bright blue awning of the Mount Sinai clinic. Thirty years after Columbia undergrad Barry Obama sat on his fire escape to smoke cigarettes and "study the dusk washing blue over the city," the work being done on this block may influence the future of President Obama's landmark legislation. It was here that the student Obama got the phone call from Kenya about his father's death, and it is here, now, that a doctor with roots in Kenya and India is bringing from Africa the dream of the healing power of community. Singh and Kaur know how real that power is.

At City Health Works, the coaches have finished their training and are working full-time. There are six coaches in all, and together they will be responsible for managing the goal-setting game plans of five hundred people.

Almost two months after his assault, Singh has regained his vigor, even as he continues to go through "heavy orthodontics." His assailants are still at large. As the investigation continues, so does Singh: he meets with students, sees his patients, works on his local and global health-care endeavors. In mid-November, Singh and Kaur spend the holiday of Guru Nanak Jayanti — the birthday of Guru Nanak — with Simran Singh at the Richmond Hill *gurdwara*, or temple, in Queens.

"Growing up, I didn't really have strong ties with the Sikh community," Kaur says. "Prabhjot didn't either. In the past, this response we've seen for Prabhjot couldn't have happened, because we didn't have much of a *sangat*, which in Sikhi is a community. *Sangat* is a really important part of our religion: having this community that you work with, that you do service with. We have that now." ❧

New music, early music, and all that jazz: Columbia's Miller Theatre, now celebrating its 25th season, continues a tradition of cutting-edge programming and performance that reaches back to Charles Ives and T. S. Eliot.

The *Love Song* of MILLER THEATRE

By Paul Hond

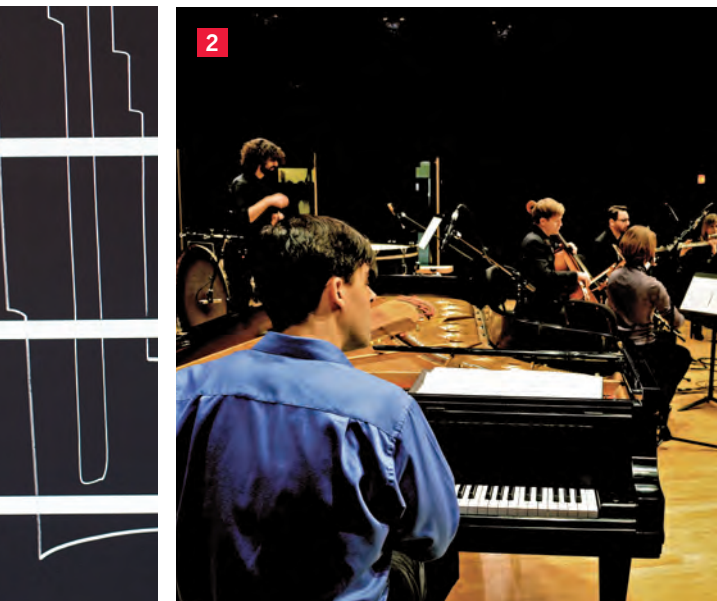


MATTHEW MURPHY

Let us go then, you and I,
To Miller Theatre, the music high
Like a falsetto from the Tower of Babel;
Let us go, through certain busy New York streets,
The melody and beats
Of Miller nights filled with orchestral swells
And madrigals, drums, and buffalo bells:
Streets that head to early- and new-music events
Of innovative content
And lead you to an overwhelming question . . .
Oh, do not ask, "Where is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the people come and go
Talking of the Horszowski Trio.

The sound that rubs up against the audience's brains,
The Cage and Reich and Zorn that nuzzles audience's brains
Licked its tongue into the corners of the campus,
Lingered upon the steel of subway trains,
Let fall upon its back the light that falls from lanterns,
Slipped by the Low steps, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a spring semester night,
Curled once about the Miller, and sang deep.



RACHEL CRITTENDEN



MATTHEW MURPHY

And indeed there will be time
 For you to hear a music-performance treat,
 Rubbing upon the audience's brains;
 There will be time, but not much time
 To get tickets for a twenty-fifth-year-season seat;
 There will be time to hear Zenón and Bach,
 And time for the works of quartets and bands
 That lift and drop harmonies on your plate;
 Time for you and time for me,
 And time yet for a hundred compositions,
 And for a hundred visions and revisions,
 Before the end of anniversary.

In the room the people come and go
 Talking of the Aaron Diehl Trio.

And indeed there was a time
 When Ives and T. S. Eliot were there
 Time before Miller was christened heir
 To the McMillin Theater for art fare —
 (Miller will say: "How my past flows with violin!")
 A history well nourished by poet and musician,
 A present rich and daring, alive with new composition —
 (Miller will say: "Good thing I'm a Columbian!")
 Do you dare
 Explore this universe?
 This spring there is ample time
 For music at Columbia's Miller Theatre, where present and past converse.

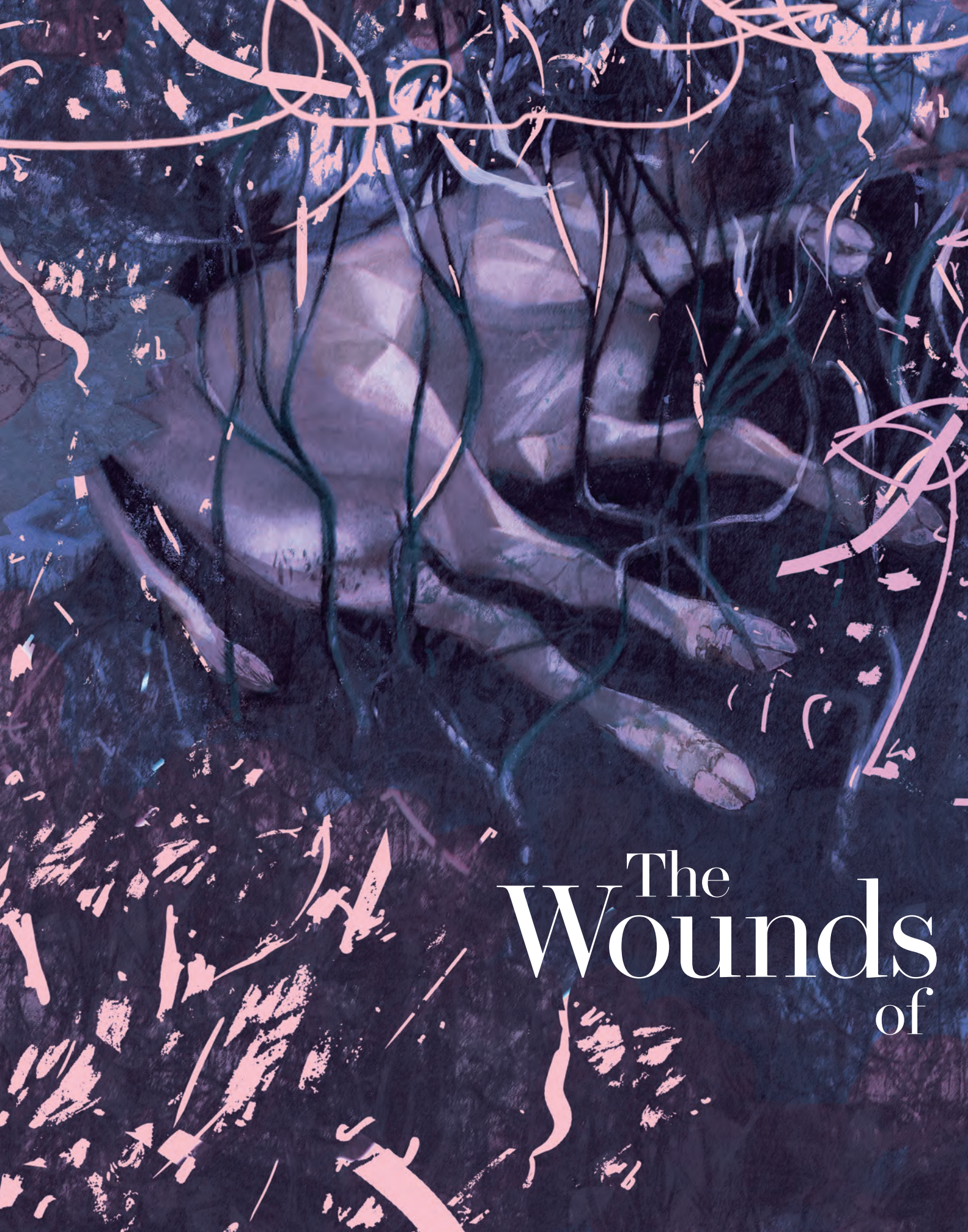


MATTHEW MURPHY

1. Mezzo-soprano Rachel Calloway and Ensemble Signal perform Georg Friedrich Haas's *Atthis*, for soprano and eight instruments, in October.
2. Pianist Stephen Gosling and other members of the ensemble Either/Or rehearse for the December 5 US premiere of Anna Thorvaldsdottir's *Ró/Serenity*.
3. Pianist Aaron Diehl, bassist David Wong, and drummer Rodney Green — the Aaron Diehl Trio — on the Miller stage in November.
4. Rand Steiger's *Joust*, for flute, bassoon, and electronics, was written for Claire Chase and Rebekah Heller, performing here in November.

Learn more about Miller Theatre's 25th season.
www.millertheatre.com





The
Wounds
of

The day unfolds to a different rhythm when you come this far east in India. A gray light seeps across the sky at around this time, a quarter past five in the morning, bringing back the simple shapes of things. I have the illusion, standing up here on the verandah, peering at the trees that are inky silhouettes and the wild shrubs that are black walls blurred with mist, that I'm seeing the earth as it was in the beginning: dark, peaceful, and absolutely still. Coming to Assam, I feel like I've migrated to another country, though this is still India. This is the same country I was born in, just the opposite end of it, two thousand miles from Punjab. The blue hills of Burma stand on the horizon, and there's a touch of China in people's faces, in their eyes. Yet everything seems far away, the noises of the world muffled by the forest.

This is the time of day I like best, the air soft and cool, free of the dirty whiffs of petrol and tar the evening breeze carries, especially when you're down in the market near the refinery. The other day, as I stood here having a beer after office, a flashing cloud of flame appeared in the distance, behind the rain tree that rises up on the hill across the road. For a moment I thought it was a view of the chimney I can see from the General Office, the gold flame so much bigger than I was afraid a fire had broken out in the refinery. It took me a moment to realize it was a trick of light, the glare of the setting sun splintering and flickering through the sprawl of tree limbs, not a blaze of oil and gas. We chase the sun with our timings here, trying to capture the most light, our clocks turned an hour ahead of the rest of the country. Normally I've had my bed tea by now, since office starts promptly at 6:00 a.m.

Since I'm one of the few Indians who owns a car, privileged with a company loan, it's only a few minutes' drive back. Some of the older engineers and scientists, the ones who started at Assam Petroleum before independence, when the British called them "Indian assistants," show a slight resentment toward me. They joke about my staying in the British settlement in the hills, looking down on ordinary mortals like them on the plain. Many of them live in cottages around the oil field and get around town on bicycles. Though the refinery operates around the clock, the General Office closes at

3:00 p.m., since my British colleagues like to end the day on the golf course or tennis courts. Many of us younger Indian managers like to join them on the sports field — I enjoy a game of squash at the club — so it was troubling to hear of a sign posted outside the Digboi Club right up to 1947, eleven years ago, when we won independence: "INDIANS AND DOGS NOT ALLOWED."

Someone pulls and scrapes a door latch behind me. My housemate Varinder steps out of his bedroom, already dressed in a shirt and tie. He raises his head abruptly, not expecting to find me here in the dark. "What happened to him? Why hasn't he brought the tea till now?"

"Three times I've called down, but there's been no reply," I tell him, feeling annoyed again that no one has come to explain the delay, neither the bearer, Suraj Ali, nor the cook or the other two houseboys.

Varinder snaps open the tin of Three Castles in his hand, offers me a cigarette. Though I've done my shave, too, waiting for the tea to be brought up, I feel untidy beside him in my crumpled pajama-kurta. We're both at the General Office, Varinder in administration, around the corner from accounts.

Walking across the wide verandah to the back staircase, he calls down in a tone of easy command, "Suraj Ali! Chalo, Suraj Ali, chai lao!" *Suraj Ali, bring the tea!* Varinder continues gazing down the back stairway the servants use to carry things up from the kitchen, which occupies a separate shed in the rear of the garden. He turns to me with a look of dismay. "He must have gotten drunk last night. Must be passed out in his room."

A shrill whooping shears the silence, startling both of us. Varinder spots it first, joining me at the verandah rail. "It's there — in the pomelo."

I shift my gaze to the tree by the gate. The sky has paled some. In the masses of clustered black leaves I see the shadow of a hornbill before it launches itself in the air. The sweep of its beak rises as its body springs upward. "Oh, yes," I say. It's a rare bird to catch sight of. I've seen it only two or three times in the sixteen months I've been in Digboi. The tribals hunt it for its spectacular beak, with which they decorate their hats. Varinder has suggested a trip

Sun Time

Fiction by Parul Kapur Hinzen '89SOA

Illustrations by Sterling Hundley

down to the Naga villages. I'd like to make a group and just travel somewhere for the weekend, the way we did a few months back, piling into two cars and driving up the Ledo Road through steep mountains all the way to the Burma border. But the two longer holidays I've taken since I joined the Assam Petroleum Company were both spent in Delhi, seeing my parents.

I remain standing at the rail after Varinder goes inside, fed up with the servant's lack of response. A cycle rattles clumsily up the road, making a loud clicking noise as it passes the house, and I begin to feel impatient again. I still have to take a bath, send my shoes down for polishing. The siren will go off at five thirty, warning there's half an hour left till office starts. Everybody up! Eight times a day the hooter wails, marking shift changes at the refinery and the General Office hours. Is Suraj in such a stupor he can't hear the deer now barking in the forest like quarreling dogs? I walk across the dusty floor and shout down the back stairs, "Suraj Ali! Suraj! Kya hogaya, bhai?" *What's going on?*

A couple of minutes later Suraj Ali finally appears in khaki pants and sweater vest, carrying a large wooden tray with both arms tensed. Cautiously he mounts the steps in his ragged slippers. A tall, embroidered cozy shields the teapot.

"What happened to you today? Why did it get so late?" He doesn't answer me, so I continue scolding him, "I've called down so many times. None of you came up to say anything."

Suraj Ali sets the tray down on the cane table, pushes the ashtray away, and greets me with his head tilted lower than usual. "Guha Sahib's servant came to talk to us," he finally says. Guha, a senior marketing manager, lives down the main road. "He said a big crowd is gathering; they're going to bungalow 18. He kept telling us to join them, but we didn't want to get involved. I told him I'm not even a Hindu — the Sahib there killed a cow." Bungalow 18 is half a mile up the secluded lane of houses that terminates at our drive. Two bungalows and a small forested patch of land separate us from no. 18.

"What happened there?"

"The Sahib shot a cow."

"What?" I keep my eyes fixed on him. Who would shoot a cow? For what reason?

"He shot a cow that entered his compound last night. The English Sahib. Now everyone wants to go to his house and confront him. They're feeling very angry — very bad." Yesterday evening, as he was cleaning the kitchen after all the servants had eaten, Suraj Ali says, he heard several blasts. They seemed to come from far away, making him think someone was on a night shoot in the forest. The hooter erupts in a long, sharp cry. Suraj Ali pauses, looking away to the road, then goes on, saying the others heard the shots, too, but no one knew what they meant. It turns out the English Sahib in bungalow 18 had several servants, all Hindus, who saw exactly what happened, according to Guha's servant. They gathered up their families and ran out of the compound, telling people along the road their Sahib had killed a cow, the word

spreading down the labor lines, to the workers' quarters near the refinery. "Everyone is coming to know, Sahib," Suraj Ali insists. "They're going to punish him for what he's done."

Reggie Platt is in bungalow 18 — R. H. Platt. He's listed on a board at the club as winner of a tennis tournament some years back. The in-charge at the crude-oil distillation unit, I believe. We have a nodding acquaintance. He's a technical man, so we don't move in the same circles. I was at the club for picture night yesterday — there was no word of the incident there. I don't understand why Platt would shoot a cow. Surely he knows the cow is venerated by us. He's a stern sort of man — that was the impression I had. You'd expect such a man to respect rules and norms.

"The cow wandered into the lawn," Suraj Ali says in a hollow tone. He concentrates on the floor with a look of dismay, though he's a Muslim and the shooting cannot feel as hurtful to him as it does to a Hindu servant. To any Hindu. Even to me. "He started shouting at it to get out, and before his servants could shoo it away with a stick, he brought his rifle and began firing from high up in the balcony. They couldn't even run out to rescue it, because he was in such a temper they were afraid he'd shoot them." As Suraj Ali tells it, I don't know how to understand Platt's action — it seems deliberate. A taunting of his servants, who looked on helplessly.

I'M RUNNING LATE TODAY, which I deplore. Less than fifteen minutes till office starts. Usually I like to reach there ten minutes early. I climb down the outer stairs to the dining room — bathed, dressed, shoes hurriedly buffed by Suraj Ali. We stay in a Chang bungalow, a wooden house raised on pillars, about ten feet off the ground, in the Assamese style. Elevation protects us from rainy-season floods and, it's said, wild animals. We did once have an elephant and her calf, who strayed out from the forest and plodded around the garden as we watched from the windows. Halfway down the steps, I pause, hearing shouting in the distance. I study the road as it bends around the house, curving away from view, trying to follow the sound. Vague cries, as if people are calling out to each other. I lean over to look as far down the Margherita Road as I can. Now I hear what sounds like wailing, and a shorter, pulsing cry — a chant — but that could be a bird.

Varinder is cutting into a grilled tomato with his fork at the table. The dining room is windowless, painted bright pink, the only room under the main floor of the house. As Suraj Ali sets down a plate of toast in front of our other housemate, Romen, a geologist, I ask him if he's heard the shouting outside.

"Must be those people going to see the Sahib," the servant mutters. He hangs back by the pantry door, waiting to hear what we have to say about it.

I remain standing and tell Romen and Varinder about the shooting. Last night Varinder and I went to see *From Here to Eternity* at the club, then had a drink at the bar. It was 11:00 by the time we got home. "I'll stop by his place and tell him there can be some trouble if he doesn't apologize to them."

“Never mind. Let him sort it out himself — foolish man,” Varinder says stiffly. Switching to Punjabi, he urges me, “Sit down, Teji. Have your breakfast.”

“I came back around 10:15 from Shyam’s place,” Romen says, squinting behind his glasses. “One bad hand after the other.” He has a fondness for cards, like me. “I didn’t hear anything. Everything looked normal.”

“Sit down, Teji,” Varinder says.

“I’m going to talk to him,” I reply. If a crowd of poor men feel injured and angry enough, there’s no telling how they might vent their frustrations. An Englishman like Platt who moves between the club and the refinery has little idea of how easily people’s sentiments can be crushed.

“I’ve seen him knocking back one peg after another at the bar,” says Romen. “Quite a boozier.”

I go out to my car. It’s a secondhand black Landmaster without a scratch on it, gleaming wet from a quick wash by one of the houseboys. There’s five lakhs of cash packed in a steel trunk in the boot that has to be delivered to the company cashier. Yesterday I went out to



I don’t understand why Platt would shoot a cow. Surely he knows the cow is venerated by us. He’s a stern sort of man — that was the impression I had.

Dibrugarh to meet our local banker, a Marwari moneylender, Kanhaiya Lal Aggarwala, who distributes cash to tea estates throughout Upper Assam on behalf of the big Calcutta banks like Grindlays and Lloyds. Since I was there, I brought back the company’s weekly funds myself rather than have his driver deliver it to us later in the week. Last night, I parked the car at the club, still full of the money. This is a safe place — people are very honest. They’re good people. Every Friday the banker’s car makes the trip through the forest to our General Office, and though the villagers along the way recognize Kanhaiya Lal Aggarwala’s Studebaker, probably aware it’s transporting a large amount of cash, there’s never been an incident.

As I drive up the lane, I hear shouting — it sounds far away, a muffled echo of words. I don’t see anyone on the road below. The bungalows perch along a ridge above the main road, screened by a thick netting of branches and brush. Bungalow 18 is set a short distance back from the lane. Platt’s lawn is bigger than ours — it

must be a two-acre lot — a hedge of spindly purplish plants outlining the perimeter of the lawn.

I stop behind his car, which is parked in the vacant space underneath the house. Platt’s bungalow is a close replica of ours, the same wide sloping roof of corrugated iron and rows of slender pillars lifting the structure off the ground. Near the outer stairs, where at our house we have clusters of clay pots, a narrow bed is planted with dahlias tied to stakes and showy orange flowers, black in the middle. Off to the distance on the right-hand side, banana trees fringe a hillock where the servants’ brick sheds stand, one end of the buildings closed off by screens of slatted bamboo. It seems deserted up there, not even a child wandering about. I turn to climb the stairs to the verandah. On the other side of the drive, at the far edge, where the lawn gives way to rambling wild growth and the darkness of hanging trees, crows squawk around something I can’t make out.

I walk quickly toward the excited birds. The hindquarters of a sprawled animal become visible to me in a swath of frilly weeds, the leaping undergrowth shaded by branches. I’ve never seen a cow lying like this, on its side, with its thin legs thrown out beneath it. I’ve only seen cows sitting up, their heads straight in the air, their feet tucked under their bodies. Now I notice patches of blood darkening the ground like smeared mud. The back legs and tail are washed in blood, too, not mud, though streaks of gray mud, or maybe it’s only dark fur, stain the legs above the hooves. It’s a young animal, slender and delicate. Blood seems to have poured from its anus, or perhaps there was a bullet to the side it’s lying on. I see no hole, no wound in its flank. Birds are walking over the calf’s narrow frame, perching on its thin legs bent sharply at the knees. They caw and scatter as I fling my arms, stepping around a puddle of bright blood.

Dark trickles have seeped down its neck, into the soft woolly white fur of its chest. I still can’t make out where it’s been shot. Its head is swallowed by a dip in the ground, a crevice filled with a gust of tall white-flowering weeds and saplings. I step closer and part the greenery. One long beautiful eye is open. Behind it, the ear is gone and the back of the head torn off. The smell is thick and raw. I can’t understand how the eye can look so lovely against the ear stub and splintered red cavity of the skull. A crow lands on its neck, pecking inside the skull’s pulpy bowl. I shut my eyes and look away. My throat feels like someone’s caught hold of it. I don’t have anything to say to Reggie Platt. I owe him no warning.

And yet I walk back to the house, noticing spurs of blood coming from a different area of the lawn, where the cow might have run from. My feet go mechanically up the outer stairs. I don’t know the reason for what happened. A dark shoe print marks several steps. Whether it is blood or slush is not clear — it’s a brown imprint visible on varnished wood. Let him explain himself — although Romen could be right. Platt may have been drinking. Nothing more to it than that. But even then, how could he lose his mind like this? Why slaughter an innocent animal?

The same company-issued cane sofas and chairs as ours form a grouping on the verandah, Platt's furniture painted white as if a feminine touch has been applied. I remember hearing, though, that he's divorced — or widowed. The wife, I'm quite sure, is gone. His children are in England or Shillong, some boarding school. He lives alone, from what I remember. Not a sound coming from the house. I knock again, harder. I wonder if he's already gone — if someone alerted him and came by to pick him up.

A Nepali boy pulls away the curtains from the glass panes and opens the doors. He is wearing a white suit and nods at me shyly. "Where's your Sahib?" I say. "Tell him Saigal Sahib has come to see him." I'm led inside to the drawing room. I can see an end of the dining table in the room to the right where the boy disappears. A light is on. Platt must be taking his breakfast. I hear the Englishman's voice break out sharply, as though admonishing the boy, "Tell him to wait." I get up, a fury stirring in me, and I cannot stop myself from crossing the drawing room and walking straight into the other room.

"Good morning, Reggie. I wanted to have a word with you." I stand at the opposite side of the table, near the doorway. I'm taken aback — there's a young lady seated with him, a dark-haired girl of sixteen or seventeen with wide gray eyes. He introduces her as his daughter, Emily, but says nothing more. I give her a quick smile, wondering what brought her home — I don't think there are any school holidays in early October. She's in a housecoat, yellow roses around the collar. She focuses on her plate as if to absent herself. I'm a little uncomfortable bringing this up in front of her, but Reggie is peering at me as if I better explain myself, so I look straight at him and say, "My bearer just informed me that your servants, and some of the servants around, and local people are upset because a cow was shot by you. I just saw it over there, lying under the trees. I think quite a large group may be coming up to you. I heard something on the road earlier —"

He stands up. "All right. Thank you for letting me know." Around the table he comes to usher me out, apparently not wanting to continue the conversation in the girl's presence. It was my mistake to burst into the room as I did — I had no idea he had a young daughter at home. Platt is wearing khaki half-pants, knee socks, brown leather shoes. The schoolboy dress of the British engineer. Perfectly bald at the top of the head, thick dark hair at the sides. His eyes are firm under fraying eyebrows that push together.

"There could be a lot of trouble if they see the cow lying there like that — it would be best for you to offer an apology. I'm sure you must be aware we Hindus consider the cow sacred. *Gow mata*, we call it, because it gives milk just like the mother. *Gow* is cow. *Mata*, mother. I can speak to them for you." I don't mean it as an offer, and he recognizes that. I mean it as an obligation. Something he must do for the terrible offense he's committed. Surely he wants to make amends for hurting people so deeply, especially in front of his daughter. Yet coming closer to him in the darkened drawing room, with the door shut to the outside, his brusque, unyielding

manner is more pronounced. I'm sure he's done it deliberately. Maybe he wasn't even drinking.

"Apologize to who? The bloody servants who come running even when you call 'Dog?'" Platt pierces me with a look as if I'm some clerk who's dared to point out a mistake in the Sahib's work and needs a dressing-down. He better mind how he's talking, I'm tempted to tell him. I'll lodge a complaint with administration. I'm a covenanted officer like him. A chartered accountant, responsible for all Assam Petroleum's cash reserves. The company has only two other qualified chartered accountants: Evans, from the London office, and A. N. Birchenough, head of the finance department, to whom my boss, Mr. Kamble, reports. I'm the only Indian with that qualification. I oversee the payroll of seven thousand workers. Out of a hundred people in the accounts hall, I'm one of five managers with a private office.

"Everyone has strong sentiments about their beliefs, Reggie. Don't let this thing build up," I force myself to say calmly.

Beneath a harsh stare, a bewildered expression comes across Platt's face. Something like puzzlement breaks through, despite his effort to appear in charge. He erupts in a grunting laugh, as if it were all meant in fun. I wonder if he might be drunk now, the way his face reddens and his voice sharpens into mockery. "There's



always a pack of them at my heels. Should I say ‘sorry’ now over a stray cow? Yeah?” His words are knotted up; his sentences twist off and break. He doesn’t speak in sharp lines like the Britishers at the General Office. Unpolished — you can hear it in his voice. “Should’ve started praying? Yeah?”

Maybe it’s that I’m a good fifteen years younger and unapologetic about confronting him that infuriates him. Or does he think of me as some kind of “Indian assistant” from the old days? In a way, he’s trying to tell me he could call me “Dog,” too, if he

Beneath a harsh stare, a bewildered expression comes across Platt’s face. Something like puzzlement breaks through, despite his effort to appear in charge.

wanted, and what could I do about it? “As you like. It’s up to you.” I walk toward the door. A ruthless fellow. No point trying to find a reason for what he’s done. There can be no reason. Still, at the door, I call back to him and can’t help the quiver in my voice, “Why did you shoot it? It was just a calf.”

“Any idea how bright a full moon is? You could see shadows on the grass, it was that bright. Couldn’t claim, could I, it was just blind shots in the

dark?” He mumbles something I can’t make out. “Teach them not to let their animals roam, making a mess on others’ property. They ought to have put up a pound on this side as well.”

I DECIDE NOT TO SPEAK OF THE INCIDENT with anyone at the office. Platt’s use of the word “property” surprised me. Does he think his bungalow is his property? Not even the general manager’s no. 1 bungalow is his own. It is all company property, company furniture, company servants. The company can take any of it away, at any time. Does he think he’s some kind of proprietor here by virtue of being a Britisher working for a British firm that owns the town? The company has set up a cattle pound out by the oilfields, I remember, near the War Graves Cemetery. That’s what he’d been talking about. Wandering cows were rounded up and imprisoned there. The owner had to pay a fine to get his animal back. Everything comes under the company’s regulations, even a poor man’s cow. I think Platt just wanted to show his servants what he could do to them in their own country. Kill a cow for sport. Mock their beliefs.

But they’d returned, I found out when I went home for lunch that day. The crowd I thought I’d heard down the road in the morning must have reached Platt’s house fifteen or twenty minutes after I left. Normally he would have been at the refinery by then, but he’d stayed back, perhaps for his daughter’s sake.

The mob had set fire to his car because at first he wouldn’t come out and listen to them, and when he did, he started shouting. It’s

the one thing they hate, being shouted at by any Sahib, and they’d reacted violently, cursing him, igniting his car. Platt went inside and reappeared on the verandah, raising his rifle. That’s when they tried to torch his bungalow, too, Suraj Ali had heard, dousing the stilts with petrol. But Platt had started firing and they ran. From our verandah Suraj Ali had seen dozens of screaming men and even school-age boys bounding down the road, yelling to each other to make sure no one had been hit.

FOR TWO DAYS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT, I wake up in the mornings seeing the calf with its open, yearning eye. In my mind it is a dying animal, not yet dead because of that eye still seeing the world, all its frenzy, seeing me — an innocent eye that seems aware of everything, accepting of everything. The word in the office is that Maclaren, the general manager, a fair-minded man, a man I admire, is sending Platt back to England. It has become a police case because Platt fired into the crowd, so his departure is seen as a solution. Still, an unspoken anxiety seems to grip the British managers. I think it’s a fear that the masses of Hindu laborers may strike or stage a rebellion of some sort.

The third day after the incident, T. A. B. Skene, our head of staff, comes to my office. After a few questions about an upcoming visit by officials of the Ministry of Natural Resources being arranged by my boss, who is in Delhi for talks with the government, he remarks that he heard I tried to intervene with Reggie Platt. He minces no words in telling me the company doesn’t condone Platt’s behavior in the least. It’s unprecedented to have the number-two man in the company sitting in my office. He pushes himself forward in one of the cane chairs set before my desk, a formidable Scot, long legs protruding, arms closed across his stomach.

Trying to fend off shyness, I tell him, perhaps too bluntly, “He fired into the crowd. He could have killed somebody.”

There’s a distinct tightness in Skene’s voice, a resistance, when he replies that Platt never shot at the crowd. He only fired warnings in the air, which people misunderstood. His mouth usually hovers between a smirk and a jutting-open challenge, so you can never gauge his mood, but now he presses his lips together, as if I’ve offended him. His face is like a soldier’s, the wavy silvery hair creamed back with a shine. A full moustache. They panicked, he says — they had no experience of guns. My servant spoke to some people who’d been there, I try to explain, and they felt themselves to be Platt’s target. He was shooting at the men. Skene lets out a long “No,” as if I’ve completely misinterpreted the situation. He was only trying to disperse the crowd. If Platt had meant to hit someone, he wouldn’t have missed all his shots. I don’t argue with him. He’s the senior man. Platt is leaving the day after tomorrow, Skene tells me, scowling slightly, as if that ought to satisfy me. ❧

Read an interview with the author:
www.magazine.columbia.edu/fiction



NEWS

CUMC breaks ground on one new building, announces plans for another

Columbia's medical campus in Washington Heights is about to undergo a major transformation.

On September 16, the Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC) broke ground on a fourteen-story glass tower at 104 Haven Avenue, between 171st and 172nd Streets, near the northern tip of its campus. The new Medical and Graduate Education Building, when it opens in 2016, will provide 100,000 square feet of high-tech classroom space for use mainly by the College of Physicians and Surgeons and the biomedical programs of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. It will represent the first major update of CUMC's educational infrastructure in nearly fifty years.

"This building represents the future of innovative training, which will allow us to continue attracting the best medical and

ner of Audubon Avenue and West 168th Street, for the Columbia University School of Nursing. This new facility will give the School of Nursing 65 percent more space than it has in its current home two blocks away, on West 168th Street between Broadway and Fort Washington Avenue. Construction on this building is expected to start in late 2014.

"The future of nursing and nursing education will soon have a new address," said Bobbie Berkowitz, dean of the School of Nursing and senior vice president of CUMC. "Our new building brings renewed focus to our education and research mission at a time when advanced-practice nurses are playing an ever-greater role in the health-care delivery system."

In conjunction with these building projects, CUMC officials are planning to create more green space, add streetlights, widen sidewalks, and in other ways improve the experience of pedestrians across the entire twenty-acre campus. The University is working with New York–Presbyterian Hospital, with which it shares its campus, to plan these infrastructure upgrades, which will be implemented gradually over the next few years. One of the more ambitious improvements is already under way: the University and the hospital are helping to pay for a renovation of the subway station at Broadway and 168th Street, through which thousands of people pass daily on their way to and from the medical campus.

"The idea is to create a more vibrant, cohesive, and welcoming campus," says Patrick Burke '89GS, assistant vice president for capital project management at CUMC. "We want this to be a warm and inviting place for everyone who comes here, whether for work, for school, for healing, or because they live in the neighborhood."

Learning with a view

The new Medical and Graduate Education Building, designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, the firm that handled the renovation of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and is currently creating a new building for the Columbia Business School in Manhattanville, is destined to be one of the most recognizable structures in northern Manhattan. Its signature element is a transparent façade on the building's south side that will expose an asymmetric arrangement of study rooms, lounges, and stairwells that extends up the height of the building. The design is unusually avant-garde for a medical school and will make the building easy to spot from along the Hudson.

"It's going to be an iconic structure," says Burke, on a tour of the site in late November. "Seen from the George Washington Bridge, driving in from New Jersey, it's going to pop. And for pedestrians here on campus, it's going to be a key visual indicator of the medical center's northern edge."



COURTESY OF CUMC

Taking part in the September 16 groundbreaking for CUMC's new Medical and Graduate Education Building are, from left, Ron Drusin '66PS, CUMC's vice dean for education; Lee Goldman, the head of CUMC; Philip Milstein '71CC, a member of CUMC's Board of Advisors; Diana Vagelos '55BC, a member of Barnard College's Board of Trustees; P. Roy Vagelos '54PS, chairman of CUMC's Board of Advisors; Kenneth Forde '59PS, a Columbia trustee; and Lee C. Bollinger, the University's president.

scientific talent in the nation," says Lee Goldman, the dean of the faculties of health sciences and medicine and the executive vice president for health and biomedical sciences.

One month after shovels went into the ground on Haven Avenue, CUMC officials announced plans for a seven-story, 68,000-square-foot building on the eastern edge of the medical campus, at the cor-

Outside, a large terrace and new green space will overlook the Hudson River. Inside, the building will favor small meeting rooms, as opposed to large lecture halls, in order to facilitate the collaborative, team-based learning and teaching that is becoming the norm in medical education. A key component of the facility will be a high-tech simulation center where medical students will hone their clinical skills by working with mannequins, actors, and virtual-learning technologies.

“A great institution can maintain its leadership only through a deep commitment to innovation, and the advanced learning resources available at the Medical and Graduate Education Building will give our students the knowledge and specialized research skills to keep pushing the frontiers of science,” says P. Roy Vagelos ’54PS, the former chairman and CEO of the pharmaceutical company Merck and the current chairman of CUMC’s Board of Advisors.

CUMC has raised two-thirds of the \$154 million it needs to pay for the facility. Lead gifts in support of the project include \$50 million from Vagelos and his wife, Diana Vagelos ’55BC; \$20 million from Philip Milstein ’71CC and his wife, Cheryl Milstein ’82BC; and \$10 million from Clyde Wu ’56PS and his wife, Helen Wu.

Room to breathe

The new School of Nursing, too, will contain a simulation center where students will be able to master complex clinical techniques in a safe, educational environment. The School of Nursing’s simulation center, like the one housed at the Medical and Graduate Education Building, will replicate exam rooms, critical-care units, operating rooms, and other health-care settings.

Construction is expected to begin on the School of Nursing’s new home, depicted here in an architectural rendering, in late 2014.



RENDERING BY CO/FX FOWLE



COURTESY OF CUMC

Columbia’s new Medical and Graduate Education Building in Washington Heights, seen in this north-facing rendering, is scheduled to open in 2016.

“Simulation centers are the classrooms of the future,” says nursing dean Berkowitz. “So this will give us a competitive edge moving forward, in terms of recruiting both faculty and students.”

The School of Nursing’s new home has been designed by the architects of CO/FX FOWLE around the concept of a town square, with meeting rooms positioned strategically throughout the building to encourage interaction among faculty, students, and visitors. Spaces that will benefit from the glass-walled building’s ample natural light, such as offices and study rooms, will be located around the sides of the structure. The new building will also feature a sunlit atrium lobby, a café, and a flexible event space on the top floor adjacent to a rooftop terrace where faculty, staff, and students can socialize.

“Our students have often told us that while they love our school, its lack of space has prevented them from engaging with each other and with their teachers as much as they’d like to,” says Berkowitz. “This new facility will change that. It will give everybody at our school, from students to faculty to visiting scholars to members of local health organizations that we partner with, more opportunities to interact. It will also be a light-filled, beautiful space that we expect will contribute to the revitalization of the entire CUMC campus.”

Bill de Blasio returns to Columbia, goes to bat for pre-K

“I have not offered a small, Band-Aid solution,” Bill de Blasio ’87SIPA told dozens of scholars and advocates in education, health, and social work at Roone Arledge Auditorium in Columbia’s Lerner Hall on November 25. “I have not offered a pilot program or a boutique concept. I have offered a game-changing investment in early-childhood education and afterschool. Nothing less will do.”

De Blasio, the mayor-elect of New York City, had returned to Columbia as the keynote speaker for a daylong conference called the NYC Summit on Children, sponsored by the Earth Institute in collaboration with the Children’s Health Fund. The gathering was organized by Irwin Redlener, director of the Earth Institute’s Program on Child Well-Being and Resilience, a new university-wide academic center to support the healthy development of children, and Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Earth Institute. The program featured three panel discussions relating to early-childhood education, led, respectively, by former *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert, broadcast journalist Jane Pauley, and WNYC radio host Brian Lehrer ’96PH.

De Blasio repeated the central message of his campaign, declaring that economic inequality was “the greatest challenge of our time,” and that to attack it, we must “squarely address the challenge of educational inequality.”

Saying that “our city will rise or fall based on our public schools,” de Blasio called for free, high-quality, full-day pre-kindergarten for every child in New York City and free afterschool programming for every middle-school child. He marshaled statistics on the connection between academic improvement and juvenile-crime reduction, noted the extreme demand in New York for pre-K seats, and alluded to the high standards of early-childhood education in Europe, China, and Brazil. In a city in which 46 percent of the residents are living below or near the poverty line, de Blasio said, increasing the hours of learning and supervision is the right thing to do not only for children and their parents, but for the entire city.

“To do this, we will need resources,” de Blasio said. “I proposed over a year ago a tax on those in this city who make a half million or more, for the next five years. It’s a small addition to their local taxation that will make a huge difference in the lives of our children. A transformational difference.”

De Blasio was introduced by President Lee C. Bollinger.

“It’s my pleasure to welcome back to this campus New York City’s mayor-elect Bill de Blasio, who as a young man clearly had the political foresight to pursue his higher education both below 14th Street and above 114th,” Bollinger said. “Even then a coalition builder.” (De Blasio got his undergraduate degree from NYU.) Bollinger noted de Blasio’s victory “places him in a very long line of Columbia alumni

ROTC and Columbia, together again



EILEEN BARROSO

Naval ROTC midshipmen from across the New York City region came to Columbia on September 30 for an event celebrating the return of NROTC here. Kathryn Susko, a freshman from Fordham University, got some help adjusting her shoulder insignia before the ceremony.

The Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) celebrated its return to Columbia this past fall, with dozens of white-clad midshipmen from universities throughout the region gathering at the Italian Academy for a ceremony with veterans, faculty, students, and alumni on September 30.

It had been two years since the University announced that it would resume its “full and formal recognition” of NROTC, following a more than forty-year absence that was initiated by student protests in 1969 and prolonged in recent decades by campus opposition to the US military’s “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy. The NROTC set up an office on campus in 2012, and since then a handful of Columbia students have traveled to the ROTC’s regional consortium unit at SUNY Maritime College in the Bronx for physical training and courses two mornings per week.

Assistant secretary of the navy Juan M. Garcia III spoke passionately about the NROTC’s role in national defense, saying that the military requires “access to the most talented, innovative, and motivated minds the country has to offer.”

Said University president Lee C. Bollinger: “I think this is more than simply the return of Naval ROTC to Columbia: this is really a historic moment in which the breach for all of its different reasons is repaired, is healed. That’s the way it should be. I want to recognize all of the students here for their participation at Columbia. We value you for many, many reasons, but one of them is that we think the diversity of perspectives and opinions that you bring to the institution is highly significant. I see it myself in the classes that I teach.”

>> See video at news.columbia.edu/nrotc2013.

as mayors of New York — as well as mayors of an independent Brooklyn, back to when Borough Hall was its own city hall. Clearly, given the sweeping returns on both sides of the river, Bill de Blasio is fully in the tradition of Columbia’s Seth Low, who at different times was elected to both jobs.”

Bollinger traced de Blasio’s career from his start on Mayor David Dinkins’s staff to his work as an official in the Clinton administration under then HUD secretary Andrew Cuomo to his election to the city council and then to the post of public advocate. “Bill de Blasio has always shown a deep commitment to a better, healthier, more just society,” Bollinger said.

In his opening remarks, de Blasio credited Columbia with helping to set him on his political path.

“I came here to study Latin American affairs and get my master’s degree,” he said. “I came here as someone seeking out great thinkers and perspectives, and I found very, very quickly at Columbia that people were rooted in New York City, in the world around us — I found a lot of people who cared about making a real impact in the world right away. And that’s part of what led me to get involved, after getting my master’s degree, in issues related to Central America and US foreign policy related to Central America.

“Some see that as controversial. I see that as natural — that we were living in a time that demanded that people respond to injus-



EILEEN BARROSO

Three weeks after being elected New York City mayor, Bill de Blasio came to Columbia to give the keynote address at the Earth Institute’s NYC Summit on Children, an all-day conference on the value of early-childhood development programs.

“I can certainly say that that spirit to address the issues we were confronting and believe we could do something about it, believe that nothing was so set in stone that it couldn’t be overcome or addressed — I felt a lot of that spirit in the years I was here at Columbia, and it fueled a lot of what I was able to do thereafter.”

>> Watch video at www.magazine.columbia.edu/deblasio.

Columbia literary festival is highlight of the fall season in Paris

You know you’re on to something when the Louvre Museum and representatives of the Paris media praise Columbia for doing what the French themselves hadn’t been able to

do for decades. Visitors to the Louvre website must have done a double take when they read, “Happily, the Americans are around to remind us that Paris is a major literary center — at least for a weekend.”

The Louvre was one of the venues for the Festival des Écrivains du Monde (World Writers’ Festival), a partnership between Columbia and the Bibliothèque nationale de France, held in September in Paris and Lyon.

The festival drew some six thousand members of the public to readings, discussions, and musical events with twenty-eight prominent authors from around the world. Salman Rushdie spoke, as did French writer and *provocatrice* Catherine Millet, Israeli author David Grossman, Sri Lankan-born Canadian novelist Michael Ondaatje, and Pakistani British novelist Nadeem Aslam. Alumnae Lila Azam Zanganeh ’02SIPA and

Jhumpa Lahiri ’89BC participated, along with faculty members Richard Ford, Deborah Eisenberg, Gayatri Spivak, Elisabeth Ladenson, and Carol Gluck, and journalism-school dean Steve Coll.

Beyond its impact in the world of letters — highlighted in a special supplement published by the newspaper *Le Monde* — the festival also made it plain that Columbia is a serious player in Paris and Europe, according to Paul LeClerc ’69GSAS, director of the Columbia Global Center in Paris. LeClerc, who was formerly the president of the New York Public Library, conceived of the event. It was brought into being by several institutions and numerous individuals under the leadership of artistic director Caro Llewellyn.

>> To watch video of festival events, visit www.magazine.columbia.edu/parisiit.



JEFF BALLINGER / COLUMBIA GLOBAL CENTERS

Salman Rushdie discusses his book *Joseph Anton* with French literary critic Nelly Kapriëlian.

Second Giving Day raises \$7.8M

Columbia Giving Day, a twenty-four hour online fund drive held on October 23, raised \$7.8 million, exceeding the previous year's inaugural effort by roughly \$1 million.

Drawing gifts from 9,759 donors in all fifty states and fifty-three countries, Giving Day had nearly twice the number of participants as the 2012 event. Their gifts will support financial aid, research, and other programs across the University.

"In just two years, Columbia Giving Day has become a major event that inspires collaboration and participation across the University and the Columbia community worldwide," said Fred Van Sickle, executive vice president for university development and alumni relations.

In a spirit of friendly competition, twenty-four of Columbia's schools and programs vied for \$332,500 in matching funds that had been offered up ahead of time by seven donors. Columbia College secured the biggest slice by raising \$2.47 million, followed by athletics with \$1.82 million and Columbia Engineering with \$732,600. The School of Continuing Education won the alumni participation challenge, with the College of Dental Medicine, Columbia College, and Barnard College close behind.



In October, students help to paint a mural with a message for the thousands of donors who contributed to the success of the University's Giving Day.

The event was driven by an extensive social-media marketing effort and the work of many volunteers; nearly one-third of donations came through a Columbia Facebook page, while the Giving Day website, which featured live video conversations on topics such as health care and nanoscience, brought in 61 percent of the gifts.

>> [To watch the archived videos, visit givingday.columbia.edu.](http://givingday.columbia.edu)

We're getting to know you

Last spring, more than six thousand Columbia alumni from every school and ninety-six countries participated in an online survey designed to help the University learn more about its graduates and to deliver a richer, personalized alumni experience.

After several months of analyzing the data collected in the Columbia Portraits survey, the University has identified seven key

Dozens of recent graduates meet at the Sky Room in Times Square for a social and networking event hosted by the Columbia Alumni Association in July. The University is now using the results of an online survey conducted last spring to inform the programming it offers alumni.



SCOTT RUDD

groups of alumni defined by characteristics that include life stages, engagement with social media, connection to Columbia, and volunteerism, as well as favorite activities, like the arts, sports and outdoor activities, traveling, and professional development.

For example, members of the youngest group are mostly females living in the New York City area. They engage in social media; appreciate the arts and outdoor recreation; and enjoy learning and professional networking.

Another group, made up primarily of alumni of Columbia's graduate schools, is career-driven. One-quarter of this group lives outside of the United States. They are entrepreneurial, confident, avid travelers, and regular participants in Columbia-sponsored activities.

The results of the survey are now informing alumni events, programs, and outreach. In particular, the survey results are helping the University to connect like-minded alumni with one another, based on their passions and interests.

"Going forward, alumni can expect to see events and programs that are more closely aligned with their personal interests," said Tim McGowan, deputy vice president for alumni and development marketing and communications. "The data we've collected will also inform, among many things, how we reach out to the greater Columbia community."

>> [Update your info at alumni.columbia.edu/directory.](http://alumni.columbia.edu/directory)



MARK STEELE

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NEWSMAKERS

Swearing In

Gale Brewer '97GS was elected Manhattan borough president in November. Known for her advocacy work with affordable housing, she has represented the Upper



Gale Brewer '97GS

West Side on the New York City Council since 2002 . . . **Caroline Kennedy '88LAW** was recently sworn in as the US ambassador to Japan. Kennedy is an attorney and the editor of nine books. From 2002 to 2011, Kennedy served as vice chair of the Fund for Public Schools, an advocacy group for school reform in New York City. She will be the third generation of Kennedys to serve in the US diplomatic corps . . . The Senate confirmed **Jeh Johnson '82LAW** as the new director of Homeland Security, replacing Janet Napolitano. Johnson was most recently in private practice, but has also served as general counsel of the Department of the Air Force and of the Defense Department.

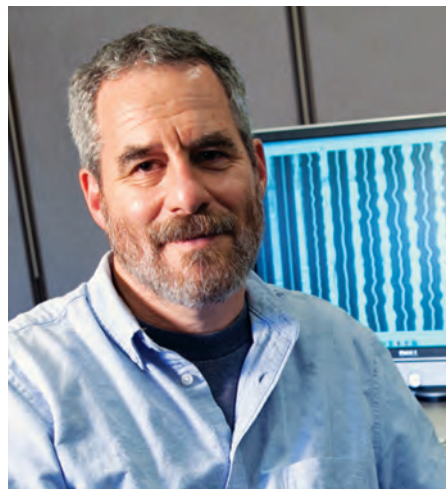
Directors' Guild

Jennifer Lee '05SOA was included on *Variety* magazine's 2013 list of ten screenwriters to watch. She has just become the first woman to direct a Disney animated feature film — she cowrote and codirected

Frozen, a fairy tale inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's "The Snow Queen." Lee also cowrote *Wreck-It Ralph*, which was nominated in 2013 for the best animated feature Academy Award . . . **Jeffrey Milarsky**, a professor of music at Columbia and the music director and conductor of the Columbia University Orchestra, won the 2013 Ditson Conductor's Award. The \$5,000 prize, established in 1945, recognizes conductors' commitment to American music.

MacArthur Park

Three out of this year's twenty-four MacArthur Fellows are members of the Columbia community. Fiction writer **Karen Russell '06SOA** was recognized for her innovative, surreal prose. She is the author of the novel *Swamplandia!* and two collections of short stories. Associate writing professor **Donald Antrim** was similarly recognized for blending fantasy and reality in his writing. He is the author of three novels and an essay collection. Experimental physicist **Carl Haber '80CC, '85GSAS** will use his award to continue developing new technology to reconstruct inaccessible and deteriorating sound recordings. Winners receive \$500,000 "genius grants" to support their work.



Carl Haber '80CC, '85GSAS

Stars of the NBA

Several Columbians were recognized at this year's National Book Awards. **James McBride '80JRN** won the fiction award for his novel *The Good Lord Bird*. McBride, a journalist, has written several other books, including the best-selling memoir *The Color of Water*. **Rachel Kushner '01SOA** was a finalist in the fiction category for her novel



CHIA MESSINA

James McBride '80JRN

The Flamethrowers. Kushner's first novel, *Telex from Cuba*, was also a finalist for the award in 2008. Additionally, **Molly Antopol '07SOA** was selected as one of this year's "5 Under 35" by the National Book Foundation. She is the author of the forthcoming story collection *The UnAmericans*.

Banking on Her

Karnit Flug '86GSAS was named governor of the Bank of Israel by Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, becoming the first woman to head the country's central bank. Flug, who immigrated to Jerusalem from Poland when she was three, previously served as an economist for the International Monetary Fund. She has worked at the Bank of Israel since 1997 and assumed her new role in November.

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EXPLORATIONS

Hair-regeneration method the first to grow new follicles

Columbia scientists have done something that until now only snake-oil salesmen claimed was possible: they have induced human skin to sprout new hair from freshly formed follicles.

The scientists say the hair-regeneration method they have developed could help not only the large numbers of men who lose their hair; it could also provide the first suitable treatments for women with thinning hair and for people with certain diseases that cause baldness.

In a paper that appeared in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* in December, researchers led by Columbia geneticist and dermatology professor Angela Christiano reported that they have generated human hair by exploiting the power of dermal papilla cells, a type of adult stem cell found, among other places, at the base of hair follicles. The scientists extracted these cells from seven balding men's scalps, multiplied their numbers in petri dishes, and then injected the resulting stem-cell clusters into small patches of human skin that had been grafted onto the backs of mice. In most cases, the researchers write, human hair emerged from the previously smooth skin.

The scientists say that more work needs to be done before their technique can be tested in humans. The hair they have grown so far is not particularly robust or handsome. They have ideas for how to improve it; they believe that by tweaking their cell-culturing methods they might soon generate dermal papilla cells that do a better job of constructing follicles when introduced back into the skin.

"This approach has the potential to transform the medical treatment of hair loss," says Christiano, who is an expert on the genetics of hair growth and skin health. "Current hair-loss medications tend to slow the loss of hair follicles or potentially stimulate the growth of existing hairs, but they do not create new hair follicles."

Not just for men

Today, the only way to put hair on a person's head where none exists is by hair transplantation. The most common type of transplantation involves surgically removing a strip of hair-covered flesh, typically from the back of the head, and grafting it onto the top. The procedure is painful, requires a long recovery, and does not increase the total amount of hair a person has, but merely relocates it. The treatment

Gene test could inform prostate-cancer treatment



Cory Abate-Shen and Michael Shen

One of the challenges in dealing with prostate cancer is deciding when it is worth treating.

Since the disease strikes men late in life and tends to progress very slowly, taking a decade or longer to have any serious effects, physicians often advise against treatment — which may involve surgery or radiation therapy, possibly resulting in impotence and urinary incontinence.

A small percentage of men with prostate cancer have a form of the disease that can turn aggressive, however. And physicians today struggle to identify these cases, even when examining a man's biopsied cancer cells under a microscope.

Physicians soon may be able to determine more reliably if a man's prostate cancer requires quick attention, with the help of a gene test designed by a team of Columbia researchers. The researchers, led by urologist Cory Abate-Shen, have identified three genes

whose collective presence they say indicates that a man has the less dire form of the disease. In a study of forty-three men with prostate cancer published in *Science Translational Medicine* last fall, they showed that their genetic test accurately predicted in every case which form of the disease a patient had.

"This could take much of the guesswork out of the diagnostic process and ensure that patients are neither over-treated nor under-treated," says Abate-Shen, whose coauthors include her husband and frequent collaborator, the Columbia medical geneticist Michael Shen; systems biologist Andrea Califano; and urologists Mitchell C. Benson and Sven Wenske.

The researchers are currently planning a larger clinical trial. If that trial is successful, they say, their screening technology could be made widely available within three years.

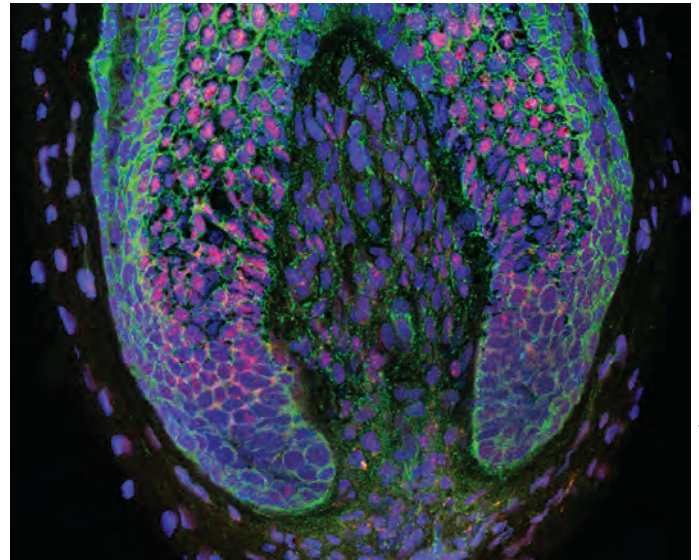
JÖRG MEYER / COLUMBIA MEDICINE

is also unsuitable for many patients. Women who lose their hair, for example, tend to see an even thinning across their scalp.

“About 90 percent of women with hair loss are not strong candidates for hair-transplantation surgery because they lack the hair to harvest,” says Christiano. “A lot of women seek hair transplants and get turned away for that reason.”

She and her colleagues are optimistic that their technique could eventually be used to restore the hair of men and women who have the most common form of hair loss, which is caused by a shrinking of hair follicles, as well as people with diseases that cause hair to fall out, such as scarring alopecia. They say it could even contribute to the development of more realistic biomedically engineered skin.

“One thing that is missing in skin substitutes that are put on burn patients is that they don’t have normal skin appendages like hair follicles and sweat glands,” says Colin A. B. Jahoda, a stem-cell biologist at Britain’s Durham University and a coauthor of the paper. “This work could be equally important in terms of being able to create a much better, more functional skin replacement.”



CLAIRE HIGGINS / CHRISTIANO LAB AT CUMC

Dermal papilla cells, shown here inside the bulb of a human hair follicle, have been cultured in a laboratory to produce new follicles.

Absorbing the runoff

Like most coastal cities with aging storm-water drainage systems, New York routinely spews contaminants into its waterways when it rains. Even a quarter inch of rain can overwhelm New York’s drainage system, which

funnels storm runoff into the same pipes that carry sewage to water-treatment plants, causing the whole system to back up and resulting in million of gallons of contaminated water spilling into local rivers.

Patricia Culligan, a Columbia professor of civil engineering and engineering mechanics, says there is a relatively cheap and easy way to address this problem: replace some of the concrete and asphalt that covers 80 percent of the city’s total land area with grass, gardens, and trees that will absorb rainwater before it ever reaches the city’s overburdened drainage system.

This past fall, Culligan and a team of twenty other investigators won a five-year, \$3 million grant from the National Science Foundation to determine what kinds of “urban green infrastructure” can absorb the most rainwater. The research team, which includes several Columbia urban planners,

earth scientists, biologists, and data scientists, is working on a test site along the Bronx River. They hope their findings will inform urban-design projects across the city.

“The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the city are proposing to collaborate on a \$2.7 billion investment in green infrastructure over the next two decades, so this grant is particularly timely,” says Culligan, who is leading the project.

The research could ultimately have implications for coastal cities around the world. “We’re working with the city to offer a new vision for dealing with storm-water runoff,” she says. “Rather than trying to handle it all with a big, centralized public infrastructure system, we believe it may be smarter to support the construction of thousands of smaller, neighborhood-based interventions that will add up to something big.”



JONATHAN LATTIF

Patricia Culligan

REVIEWS



The anti-slavery leader John Brown stands defiant in John Steuart Curry's mural *Tragic Prelude*, which hangs in the Kansas State Capitol.

The Abolitionist's Song // By Rebecca Shapiro

The Good Lord Bird

By James McBride (Riverhead, 433 pages, \$27.95)

When it was announced at the National Book Awards dinner on November 19 that James McBride '80JRN had won the fiction award for his novel *The Good Lord Bird*, the author bounded to the stage clutching not an acceptance speech, but a napkin. Later, he told the *New York Times* that he'd been so surprised to win, beating out front-runners like Jhumpa Lahiri and George Saunders, that instead of listening to the announcement, he'd taken a big bite of dessert. The moment matches his book perfectly — unpretentious, very funny, and totally endearing.

At the center of McBride's irreverent tale is Old John Brown of Harpers Ferry fame, one of the earliest and boldest white abolition-

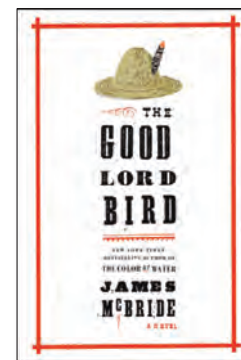
ists, who strove to eliminate slavery one gunfight at a time. This isn't Brown's debut as a literary subject — he makes appearances in Herman Melville's "The Portent," Russell Banks's *Cloudsplitter*, and Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*, to name just a few — but McBride's take is an outrageous caricature of a man, "smelling of buffalo dung, with a nervous twitch in his jaw and a chin full of ragged whiskers." A religious zealot, Brown constantly thwarts his own progress by interrupting raids to drop to his knees and pray, misquoting the Bible so spectacularly that his verses "all bumped and crashed and commingled against one another till you didn't know who was who and why he was praying for it."

The book is narrated by Little Onion, a young slave boy whom Brown takes for a girl and kidnaps (or “liberates,” as he would say) from a Kansas Territory home. Initially, freedom doesn’t sit so well with Onion. As a slave, he was well fed and connected with his kin, and traveling with Brown and his army (“nothing but a ragtag assortment of fifteen of the scrawniest, bummiest, saddest-looking individuals you ever saw”), particularly disguised as a girl, isn’t easy. So unsavory is the life that Brown promises, that he has to beg some slaves to join him: “I’m Captain John Brown! Now in the name of the Holy Redeemer, the King of Kings, the Man of Trinity, I hereby orders you to git. Git in His holy name! Git! For He is always on the right side of justice!”

The setting of *The Good Lord Bird*, far from the Deep South in the lawless but slightly less racially oppressive Kansas Territory, is perhaps what makes it possible for McBride to marry slavery with comedy. The characters know that there is a far worse place for blacks; people are constantly threatening to send Onion to New Orleans, where the choice between slavery and freedom wouldn’t be so difficult. Still, any comic novel about such a calamitous time is a daring conceit, which in the wrong hands could go painfully wrong. McBride’s America feels huge, chaotic, and very much in formation, and yet he still manages to ask the important question: why did it take us so long to separate the most basic rights from wrongs?

Peppered throughout the book are charming cameo appearances by historical figures, and like Brown, they aren’t always as the history books have had us believe. A saintly Harriet Tubman gives Onion her scarf, which eventually grants him safe haven on the Underground Railroad. But Frederick Douglass doesn’t emerge as quite so sympathetic. Rather, he is, in Onion’s words, “a speeching parlor man,” who lives with his black wife and white mistress and rejects Brown’s pleas to accompany him to Harpers Ferry, calling it a suicide mission.

McBride is best known for his memoir, *The Color of Water*, a staid look at his mixed-race heritage that spent two years on the bestseller list in the late 1990s, so this kind of picaresque adventure is a surprising turn. Comparisons to Twain are inevitable, particularly given McBride’s use of vernacular — or, as McBride put it in an interview, “that old country talk.” But the raucous joy of traveling with Brown and his army also recalls Chaucer and Boccaccio. Brown may not be a polished hero, but he’s certainly an entertaining one, particularly with his band of not-so-merry men and one spunky, cross-dressing kid in tow.



The Second Son // By Kelly McMasters

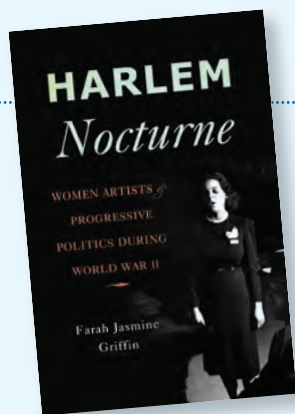
Raising Henry: A Memoir of Motherhood, Disability, and Discovery
By Rachel Adams (Yale University Press, 272 pages, \$26)

The end of the first chapter of Rachel Adams’s *Raising Henry: A Memoir of Motherhood, Disability, and Discovery* finds Adams on the maternity ward of a hospital on Christmas night. Her husband, Jon, has just left her with a bag of cake before heading home to care for their first son, Noah. Up to this point, a detached calm has pervaded the writing, even the gory delivery details. But here, alone in her room, Adams falls apart. “I’d like to say I cried because I was worried about the baby upstairs in the NICU. But I didn’t feel much of anything for him. I was mourning the loss of the son I thought I was going to have and the family I imagined we would be.”

Adams, a Columbia professor of English and comparative literature, had her near-perfect family until that evening in the hospital

room. She had met her husband at UC Santa Barbara and fallen in love while they were teaching assistants for a large lecture class on Shakespeare. She went on to publish a book that helped her earn tenure at Columbia, and along with Jon, now working as a lawyer, welcomed Noah into their faculty-housing apartment on the Upper West Side. But then she gave birth to a silent baby boy, and, minutes later, was told he had Down syndrome.

This is not the saccharine strain of “mom-oir” that we’ve come to expect. Instead of baby-bottle mishaps and sleepless nights played for laughs, we find the narrator and her husband awkwardly struggling to wrench a feeding tube down their newborn’s throat with a disapproving nanny as audience. In place of the judgmental neighbor clucking about her brand of juice box,



Three Women

The book: *Harlem Nocturne* (Basic Civitas Books)

The author: Farah Jasmine Griffin, Columbia professor of English and comparative literature and African-American studies

Columbia Magazine: Typically, the conversation about Harlem's greatest artistic achievements centers on the Renaissance of the 1920s and '30s. Your new book focuses on the 1940s. How does that time period differ politically and culturally from the Harlem Renaissance?

Farah Jasmine Griffin: Painter Romare Bearden said the '40s differed from the '20s because the later period was much more explicitly political. The artists saw themselves as part of politics in ways that the Renaissance didn't always permit, and they were also less concerned about presenting a positive face. These artists wanted to present complex faces.

CM: You illuminate this time through the lives of three women artists — modern dancer Pearl Primus, writer Ann Petry, and jazz pianist Mary Lou Williams. What drew you to them?

FJG: They were prime examples of very, very talented artists, who were well known in the period, but who, I think, the general public had forgotten. I'd known about Ann Petry for a long time, because I'm a teacher of literature. I'd written about her. I teach her novel *The Street*. I had also known of Pearl Primus and Mary Lou Williams, but I didn't know them well. So I saw this book as an opportunity to reintroduce them to readers, with the hope that they would find these three women as compelling as I did. I was very moved by their words, their art, their music, and in Primus's case, dance.

CM: They were all civil-rights activists in their own ways. Do you think that they were also feminists?

FJG: I think that Petry was, without question. She understood "intersectionality"

before we began to theorize it — the relationship between race, class, and gender. She understood her own identity as a writer in relation to the big boys who got more attention. I think that Mary Lou would not have called herself a feminist. She bought into notions of patriarchy. She would distinguish herself by saying, "I play like a man. I'm as good as the boys." Even though she did sometimes catch hell for being a woman, she never acknowledged that, because she was one of the few women who were fully accepted. She mentored young women, she was very helpful to many young women, but I don't think she had any kind of explicit understanding of herself as a feminist. I don't see that with Primus, either.

CM: At some point in everyone's story, there is a discussion of communism. What is the link between communism and the struggle for civil rights?

FJG: The communists in Harlem were actually dealing with racism and white supremacy as an issue before either of the major parties. They had the hearing of the black communities and black activists. So I wanted to show in this book this range of relationships.

CM: Movement was key for these women: this is evident in Primus's legendary leaps across the stage, in Petry's walks through Harlem as she searched for inspiration, and in Williams's melodic movements between bebop and swing. Yet they were also very aware of outside limitations. You call this the black paradox of confinement and mobility. Many of the same issues, including housing and equal access to jobs, are still critical. How relevant is this paradox to life today?

FJG: Very important. I see stop-and-frisk as that exact same thing. There used to be a time when there were places where black people weren't allowed. Now, there's no place where we aren't allowed. We have the mobility; we can walk. But we're under surveillance. We're constantly being watched, we are criminalized without having done anything. There's that paradox of confinement within mobility. We always know that we really don't have freedom of mobility and movement. We see it in housing, but especially in the crisis around public education. Public school has traditionally provided access to mobility; it's not been the place where you're trapped. You're trapped without class mobility. The difference is that the black community is really stratified in terms of class so that not everyone is confined in the same way. But I think yes, it's still a paradox that we live with.

CM: Do you see black artists today using their work to engage in social activism?

FJG: Some of them do, and some of them don't. What's different is that artists of the '40s were helping to shape social movement, but they didn't create the movement. In some ways, the movement created them: there was a context for them so that when they arrived, they could help shape their vision and their work. For contemporary artists, that's less so. There are not a lot of dominant social movements that they can join. But artists like Primus, Petry, and Williams did not have all the commercial opportunities that contemporary artists have; the market just wasn't quite the same. It's a different way of being socially conscious, and I don't think one is rewarded for it as much now.

— Lauren Savage

Adams is faced with colleagues at cocktail parties asking, “Didn’t you get tested?” The grim assumption that none of her progressive peers dare to speak aloud is that Adams would have chosen to terminate her pregnancy had she known what her son would be like — an already painful and personal consideration made more so since they were often looking directly at Henry as they asked the question.

Some of the best memoirs are written to make sense of things, to put a catastrophe into order. By remaining logical and controlled, Adams allows space for readers without her experience to connect with her ideas. At times this distance can be frustrating — the chapters often feel like linked essays without the full texture of an immersive memoir. The isolated, idea-driven chapters seem to mimic the way a new mother’s brain is sometimes forced to work — depth in small doses, when time allows.

But this is no ordinary new mother. Adams’s first book, *Side-show U.S.A.: Freaks and the American Cultural Imagination*, made her uniquely tuned to disability, and society’s view of difference: “Freaks were also deeply disturbing because they reminded the spectator of all the ways she wasn’t quite normal.” Viewing her son’s situation through this lens, Adams quickly comes to the fierce conclusion that her son is not a tragedy, and she won’t suffer anyone who looks at him as such.

After researching Down syndrome, Adams was left “wondering where we would find Henry in the midst of this avalanche of symptoms and characteristics. How would we make room for our baby to develop an identity of his own, and would we be able to recognize it apart from his diagnosis?” When she was a child, Adams had watched her mother die of lung cancer, and she was determined that her home would not be defined by illness. Henry was not sick; Henry was simply Henry. Watching Adams herd early-intervention therapists, catalog paperwork, juggle doctor visits, and fight to gain entry to preschool is exhausting. But there is beauty and joy here, too, of a special sort.

Early on, some of the treacly books and websites that Adams had read suggested that Henry might teach his parents “the lessons of patience, humility, and tolerance . . . that our son was an angel, or that God had chosen us to be his parents.” That Adams transcends these pedestrian story lines herself is a welcome surprise. The narrator’s worldview never really shifts — she remains an anxiety-prone “Eeyore.” But in the beginning of this story, she wishes Henry were anyone but the baby he is. By the end, she doesn’t want him to be anyone else.

Kelly McMasters ’05SOA teaches journalism and creative writing at Columbia. She is the author of Welcome to Shirley: A Memoir from an Atomic Town.

Depth in Venice // By Joshua J. Friedman

Sarah Sze: Triple Point

By Sarah Sze (Gregory R. Miller & Co./The Bronx Museum of the Arts, 160 pages, \$45)

At the center of a mysterious laboratory, a pendulum swings. Piles of salt, ceramic shards, and potted cacti radiate outward in ascending size. What mad scientist has, moments ago, fled the building? What laws of heaven and earth has he deduced?

Behold the curious, immersive world designed by artist and Columbia visual-arts professor Sarah Sze for the 2013 Venice Biennale. Inspired in part by Venice’s contributions to Renaissance science, Sze appropriates familiar scientific tools — pinned specimens, gauges, task lamps — to tease the viewer with the prospect that these inscrutably ordered objects will tell a story, if only one stares long enough.

The exhibition catalog, *Sarah Sze: Triple Point*, gives readers a photographic tour of the multi-room installation, capped by an illuminating dialogue between Sze and the Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jennifer Egan, who find common ground in the art of disorientation.



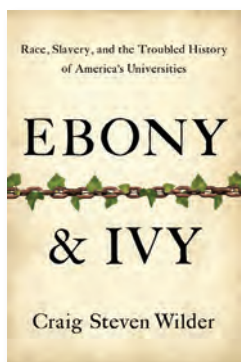
TOM POWEL IMAGING

Ivory Towers // By Manisha Sinha

Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities

By Craig Steven Wilder (Bloomsbury, 433 pages, \$29.99)

The connection between slavery and the early histories of some of America's most elite colleges and universities has long been known, and came to particular prominence after 2003, when Brown University's president, Ruth Simmons, commissioned a committee to pursue the subject. But the general public has largely remained in the dark. With his eye-opening book, *Ebony and Ivy:*



Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities, MIT history professor Craig Steven Wilder '94GSAS seeks to change that. He argues that some of the nation's oldest institutions, Columbia included, played a major role in the extermination of indigenous populations and the enslavement of people of African descent from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. Furthermore, the establishment and growth of these institutions were dependent on wealth accrued from the Atlantic

slave trade and slavery, while their professoriates and administrations provided intellectual cover. This book is nothing short of an exposé of what we would today call higher education's historical crimes against humanity.

Some of the earliest colleges in the British American colonies — Harvard, the College of William and Mary, Yale, the College of New Jersey (Princeton), and Codrington in Barbados — were, in Wilder's words, "instruments of Christian expansionism" and British imperialism. While these colleges and their promoters used the promise of educating and Christianizing the native population to fundraise at home and abroad, in fact, they contributed to the decimation of Native American nations and the aggrandizement of their lands for profit, with some colleges, such as Trinity and Williams, receiving substantial chunks themselves. John Eliot's "praying towns" in Massachusetts, designed to convert Native Americans to Christianity, were rapidly replaced by university buildings dedicated as "Indian colleges," where a handful of native students were consigned to elementary education. Indian missionary the Reverend Eleazar Wheelock, the founder of Dartmouth, was one who followed this path of tokenism: fewer than twenty native students graduated from Dartmouth in two centuries, despite significant funding. At the same time, Wheelock's students and faculty, like many of their compatriots, proved eager to make war on Indian nations and cultures, as conflicts with the Iroquoia escalated in the late 1770s.

The expansion of American higher education in the eighteenth century, Wilder argues, coincided with an economic boom in merchant capitalism, which rested on the twin pillars of the slave trade and slave labor. King's College (Columbia), Queen's College (Rutgers), Brown, and Princeton were all established with the profits of human bondage. Slave traders financed endowed chairs and became trustees, and colleges made a special effort to recruit the sons of a wealthy slaveholding colonial elite. Colleges such as Washington College (Washington and Lee) and William and Mary even held slaves and advertised them for sale or hire; one particularly disturbing trend that Wilder uncovers was the abuse of these college slaves in undergraduate pranks.

Just as damning, Wilder writes, was the indispensable place of American academics and intellectuals in the development of the pseudoscience of race. The new science of man and the Enlightenment mania for cataloging the human species in a hierarchical scale of beauty, intelligence, and nature fed on the raw material provided by colonial scholars. The scalps, skulls, and skeletons of Native Americans and African slaves became "human curios" collected and displayed by museums and scientists in Europe. Their bodies also proved to be ready and easily exploitable sources for the study of anatomy and medicine at the new medical schools at Columbia, Penn, and Dartmouth. As Wilder perceptively remarks, "White people's unlimited access to the bodies of slaves could hardly be thought to cease at death." As science displaced religion as the arbiter of universal truths, American universities became bastions of scientific racism. Thomas Jefferson, founder of the University of Virginia, among many others less famous, speculated in theories of racial inferiority that provided a seemingly objective defense of slavery against abolitionists and other alleged extremists. Nor was this a regional issue, as later historical accounts might have us believe. Southern pro-slavery race theorists were trained in Northern academies, and in the North itself a slew of scientific racists contributed to the intellectual defense of slavery.

This trend continued in the nineteenth century, when college administrations proved to be ardent supporters of the American Colonization Society, founded in 1816, which proposed to repatriate all free black people back to Africa. Colonizationists, a few of whom initially hoped to end slavery, became some of the staunchest opponents of American abolitionists and their commitment to racial equality. Students and faculty who dared to join the abolition movement faced censure and even dismissal. Wilder recounts the case of Charles (Karl) Follen, a German professor

at Harvard in the 1830s, who was made to resign his position in part due to his active participation in the abolition movement. Even after the Mexican-American War ended in 1848, when anti-slavery sentiment permeated Northern society, many universities remained politically conservative and committed to furthering this kind of social hierarchy. Wilder could well have added that the Massachusetts abolitionist senator Charles Sumner, a favorite of Supreme Court justice Joseph Story, was denied his mentor's position at Harvard Law School, and the accomplished black abolitionist Martin Delany was thrown out of Harvard Medical School, because of white students' complaints. The university later erected a statue of Sumner after his death that still graces Harvard Square.

Ebony and Ivy is the unsettling and immensely important story of the American academy's racist past. It's a magnum opus for Wilder, who was awarded the Columbia University Medal of Excellence in 2004, at the university's 250th anniversary Commencement. Rarely does a work of historical scholarship have the potential for making such a tremendous impact on our current debates over race and inequality. Judging from the broad coverage Wilder's book has received in the press, that impact is already beginning to be felt.

Manisha Sinha '94GSAS is a professor of Afro-American studies and history at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She is the author of the forthcoming book The Slave's Cause.

Off Rhyme // By Stacey Kors

Love, Dishonor, Marry, Die, Cherish, Perish

By David Rakoff '86CC (Doubleday, 113 pages, \$26.95)

A posthumous book by an author you love
Can arrive like a gift sent to you from above.

David Rakoff (departed too soon, more's the pity)
Made his name writing essays both moving and witty.

Satiric, neurotic, but also insightful,
His cultural take was spot-on and delightful.

But Rakoff has offered no essays this time,
Leaving us with a novel — in couplets that rhyme.

(The title's not metered as poets might wish:
Love, Dishonor, Marry, Die, Cherish, Perish.)

Hopping cities and tracing the whole century last,
Mr. Rakoff assembles a colorful cast.

There's Margaret, abused by her stepfather's lout-ness,
And Clifford, gay artist, rejoicing in out-ness.

There's Helen, career woman; Nathan and Josh;
And self-involved Susan — in names we're awash.

Quick character sketches of lives intertwined
Through various chapters, both nasty and kind.

What this book is, exactly, is quite hard to say.
A novel? A poem? Morality play?

While the tales that we read here are sometimes amusing,
The format would not have been that of my choosing.

For as much as I tried to enjoy it, I never
Stopped thinking it all felt too forced and too clever.

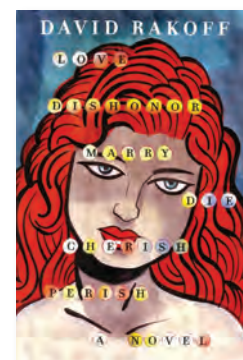
(And if this review leaves you wanting to scream,
Just imagine the feeling by page 113!)

But all that being said, Rakoff's book has a moral:
While humans — weak mortals — can wound and can quarrel,

Beauty and goodness and, yes, even grace
Can still, in this untidy world, find a place.

The message is poignant from one laid to rest,
Though the medium may be too tough to digest.

So I'll reread his essays and laugh once again.
Keep them smiling in heaven, David Rakoff. Amen.





Actors Anonymous

By James Franco
(Little A, 295 pages, \$26)

Toward the end of the novel *Actors Anonymous*, a nameless narrator says that his thoughts are “the testimony of someone who wears a mask.” It’s a fitting line from the author, the actor James Franco ’11SOA, who is famous for wearing many public masks (actor, director, academic, writer), while keeping his personal life quiet.

The novel, which comes after Franco’s short-story collection *Palo Alto*, consists of a series of anecdotes about struggling actors — a McDonald’s worker who uses his shifts to practice accents, a recovering addict who watches old movies with a washed-up actor, a former child star recalling his fame and sexual exploitation — in a sort of twelve-step support group. These are interspersed with chapters from the group’s leader, sounding a lot like Franco himself, who breaks away from the narratives to share his insights into Hollywood: “Many of us have entered into this craft to escape reality,” he says, and “I’m like a sophisticated prop.” Sometimes these sections read like a rant or even a self-help book, but at other moments they reveal a vulnerable, generous narrator eager to spill his secrets. Franco deftly switches between these different characters’ voices and fearlessly experiments with form throughout the book: one section is a screenplay, while another is made up entirely of footnotes. But what makes this book so powerful is Franco’s own confessional voice. Perhaps this is finally a personal introduction to a man ready to be unmasked himself.

— Elisabeth Sherman ’14SOA



MacDowell

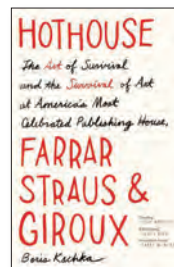
By E. Douglas Bomberger
(Oxford University Press, 349 pages, \$39.95)

By the time Edward MacDowell was offered the chance to create a department of music at Columbia in 1896, he was America’s most famous composer and pianist. His compositions are romantic, direct, and deliberately not American. MacDowell spent more than a decade studying and writing music in Europe, and rejected outright the idea of an American style or school, believing instead in an internationalism that transcended nationalism. E. Douglas Bomberger has written a book that alternates between a detailed biography and a study of several of MacDowell’s principal works. Today, concertgoers still regularly hear his second piano concerto and many pianists are familiar with his *Woodland Sketches* and *New England Idyls*. The other works have become rarities.

MacDowell’s time at Columbia was famously fraught. He worked mightily to build a program that taught more than music appreciation, offering, as well, advanced classes in composition. Ultimately, his collision with the new president, Nicholas Murray Butler, and his impolitic handling of their disagreements, led to scandal in the press and to his resignation. MacDowell declined fast and died in 1908.

The idea of homegrown American concert music changed with the generation of composers born a decade before and after MacDowell’s death; as Aaron Copland put it, “We were rather tough on Edward MacDowell.” Bomberger has done a good job explaining the composer’s innovations and urging us to hear his music “for what it *is* rather than what it is *not*.”

— Michael B. Shavelson



Hothouse

By Boris Kachka
(Simon & Schuster, 448 pages, \$28)

It’s official: the romance of book publishing is dead. Cozy offices have morphed into windowless cubicles; digital sales conferences have taken the place of the three-martini lunch. But amid this depressing corporatization, one legendary house has not only endured but thrived, writes Boris Kachka ’97CC, ’98JRN in his sweeping history of Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Sparing no detail, Kachka takes us back to the company’s founding in 1946, when the cantankerous WASP John Farrar teamed up with Roger Straus, a restless, womanizing jock from a wealthy German-Jewish clan. Nine years later, Straus hired Robert Giroux ’36CC, a cerebral working-class “Jersey City Jesuit” and an experienced editor who became Jeff to Straus’s Mutt. While Straus partied with Susan Sontag (in matching leather!), Giroux stuck to his office, eating a daily lunch of turkey and Jell-O and quietly cultivating a cadre of authors that would come to define twentieth-century literature — T. S. Eliot, Flannery O’Connor, and his Columbia classmate John Berryman ’36CC. Though Kachka sprinkles a lot of fairy dust, by the end of the book we realize that FSG isn’t so different from any other modern book publisher: for every Nobel or Pulitzer Prize winner published, there was a diet book, a celebrity memoir, or a thriller, making the money that kept intellectualism alive. It’s what Straus called “class-mass,” a balance of taste and commercial potential, and the unveiling of FSG’s particular success in achieving it is certainly worthwhile, if not quite as revelatory as Kachka might have hoped.

— RS

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FINALS



Al Jaffee's back-page Fold-In from *MAD* no. 313, September 1992.

MAD Man

If you're anything like Karen Green '97GSAS, Columbia's graphic-novel librarian, you spent many childhood hours on the floor of the drugstore reading *MAD*. You often turned right to the magazine's three-paneled back page to see what colorful send-up of the culture lay waiting to be discovered by means of a neat-o folding trick that revealed a punch line in the form of a new picture and message. In this way, you came to know the name Al Jaffee, creator of the *MAD* Fold-In. And if you *are* Karen Green, you're thrilled beyond words (and pictures) to have acquired last fall, on behalf of Columbia, the archive of one of America's most treasured humorous cartoonists.

Jaffee, who is ninety-two, began drawing the *MAD* Fold-In in 1964. He's finishing up his latest one this very moment. All told, he's worked continuously at *MAD* for nearly sixty years, teaching generations of American preadolescents how to fold paper, and sharpening the eyes of their older siblings to the duplicities of advertising, politics, and authority in general — a pursuit for which the Fold-In was particularly well suited. "I love making a paragraph or a sentence serve two purposes at

the same time," says Jaffee from his East 56th Street studio. "I love that challenge."

Jaffee grew up in the Bronx, where as a teenager in the 1930s he'd spend hours drawing with his friend, future *MAD* cartoonist Will Elder. "What shaped my outlook was hanging out with other people who had a similar sense of humor," Jaffee says. "I was not a *fan* of anything per se; I was an observer. Willie and I would do cartoons of our neighbors and show our work to each other."

According to Green, Columbia will receive all materials associated with Jaffee's "Snappy Answers to Stupid Questions" pieces for *MAD*, materials from the Fold-Ins, non-comics-related art, unused or rejected ideas, and other Jaffeenilia. Jaffee hopes that visitors to the archive will find that "*MAD* made a decent contribution to the discourse in our society by capturing, in a humorous way, some of the nuttiness in which we indulge."

Though Jaffee is a dean among comic-book artists, he doesn't want to be put on a pedestal.

"Cartooning was the only way I could figure out how to make a living," he says, and laughs. "It's sort of justified my dissolute existence."

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