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THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1977

Police Identify Voyeurism Suspect, Say There Were More Incidents Than Previously Reported

ALEX KLAUVENS
NEWS EDITOR



Co-organizers of Take Back Our Showers (from left to right) Grace Amadio '21 and Devon Stahl '19
Image Courtesy of Sean D. Elliot/The Day

New London Police say they have identified and made contact with a 20 year-old male suspect in a months-long voyeurism investigation at the College surrounding five different reports of female students being photographed in shower changing areas. Based on evidence seized from multiple electronic devices belonging to the suspect, NLPD says the investigation has now expanded “to include more incidents than have been reported.”

According to New London police chief Peter Reichard, detectives made contact with a suspect on Thursday, Feb 7 and “seized digital media” which included multiple electronic devices. Reichard says the department is currently conducting a forensic review of the suspect’s devices, but that the suspect has not yet been arrested. He said an arrest warrant will likely follow that review, but could take multiple weeks to be approved by a judge.

Both NLPD and the College have conducted independent investigations, according to Ebony Manning,

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Safety and Security in Off Campus Housing

MAX AMAR-OLKUS
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Events of the past week— including two separate break-ins at independent style living spaces— have brought issues of security and safety to the forefront of student discussion.

The first incident occurred early in the morning on Feb 10 at River Ridge 5. An individual, described as a male wearing a black and white baseball hat and a backpack, entered the apartment between 4:30 and 4:50 in the morning.

In an interview with the *Voice*, one of the residents, Shelby Purdum '20, said she woke up to the feeling that the blankets on her chest had been taken off. She sat up to see a man in a hat and a backpack crouching next to her bed. Disoriented and confused, she asked who the man was to no response. They stared at each other for “what felt like a really long time” and he left calmly without saying anything or taking any of their possessions.

Feeling violated and afraid, Purdam immediately woke up her roommates Julia Callahan '19, Chloe Mayhew '19, and Martha Willey '19. Willey recounted calling Campus Safety at 4:54am and was adamant that she conveyed the urgency of the situation.

A few minutes later, a neighbor who had been sleeping at the apart-

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NEWS

Walter Stuart investigates Conn's use of adjunct professors on page 8.

OPINIONS

Cameryn Lesko-Jelley continues her Senior Spotlight series by interviewing Honor Council Chair Alison Joyce on page 10.

OPINIONS

Price Day criticizes the Failure to Act policy and its impact on students on page 11.

ARTS

Sara Abbazia reviews Wig & Candle's *Tinder Tales* on page 12.

From the Editor

This issue of the *Voice* looks a little different than past editions. We have a number of investigative pieces, ranging from an examination of the #take-backourshowers campaign to the Mike Kmec indictment and recent break-ins at off-campus housing locations. We aim to explore all sides of a story, interview relevant figures, and ask probing questions to give the campus community news of the greatest relevance. But stories that criticize the College administration—or at least reveal controversial policy—have the potential to devolve into gossip. While news can never be neutral, and every writer holds biases, we strive to balance each article by reflecting on the policy that spurred discussion rather than the voices of individual members on campus.

Students living in Ridge 5, for instance, provided the *Voice* with inside details on the nature of last week's break-in last. While they gave us important information not released to the wider campus community by Campus Safety, their testimony was not the focal point of the article. Instead, their perspective allowed us to more fully explore the relationship between the College and the New London police, as well as understand how the College plans to address lingering security concerns. News Editor Alex Klavens also relies on court documents to frame the Mike Kmec article—and thereby avoid the potential for the piece to appear anything other than factual.

We do pride ourselves on finding a “scoop” because digging deep into campus issues is a necessary component of relevant, worthwhile journalism. But the word “scoop” also holds gossipy connotations that seem particularly pronounced when we report at a small and insular school with a tight-knit community. So we want to make clear that we never seek to perpetuate or spread rumors with the *Voice*'s reporting. While we can't always control how the community reacts our published pieces, we hold ourselves to the highest standards to ensure that we do not perpetuate unverified or unproductive information. To respect the privacy of our peers, we also want to emphasize that the *Voice* will always protect the identity of its anonymous sources.

We have been told that we sometimes are too critical of the College administration in our reportage, and other members of the campus community say we could do more to report on controversial college policy. Our goal, though, is not to attack any individual or institution—it is to make people on campus aware of policy developments. Only with awareness can we take collective action to understand our shared interests and positions. We hope that this issue sheds light on leading campus issues and moves us closer toward achieving awareness of campus activity.

-Dana

THE COLLEGE VOICE

The views and opinions expressed in *The College Voice* are strictly those of student authors, and not of Connecticut College. All content and editorial decisions remain in the hands of the students; neither the College's administration nor its faculty exercise control over the content.

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Community Bulletin

CT Judge Orders Deposition of Alex Jones in Sandy Hook Defamation Case

A Connecticut judge has ordered *Info Wars* host Alex Jones to give a sworn deposition in a case brought against him by families of Sandy Hook shooting victims. In the 39-page complaint filed, the families allege that even though Jones “does not in fact believe that the Sandy Hook shooting was a hoax,” he accused them of “faking their loved ones’ deaths and insisted that the children killed that day are actually alive.” They also claim that Jones and his associates have subjected them to death threats, harassment and abuse both on and offline.

Advocates For Abuse Victims Say Norwich Diocese Could Be Withholding Names Of More Abusers

The Diocese of Norwich is being criticized for omitting names from a list of clergy members credibly accused of sexual abuse. On Feb. 11, the Diocese released the names of 43 priests, deacons, and bishops known to have committed sexual assault against minors. But, advocates for victims of abuse are not satisfied with the current level of transparency exhibited by the Diocese. A recent report in *The Day* named six other people affiliated with the Diocese who also weren’t included in the list.

Progressives ready to battle Connecticut’s rich over taxes

A major liberal block in the state House of Representatives unveiled a series of tax proposals on Feb. 14 that could put them at odds with Gov. Ned Lamont and other fellow Democrats in the legislature. House Democratic Progressive Caucus members favor raising income taxes on rich households and the oppose repeal of the estate tax. The caucus also expressed caution over Lamont’s plans to broaden the sales tax base and to dramatically curb state borrowing, saying these moves also could shift costs onto low-and middle-income households.

Sports Spotlight

BY PRICE DAY

Men’s Results

Ice Hockey loses 2-3 to Amherst, 1-2 to Colby, wins 5-4 vs. Bowdoin

Basketball loses 66-72 to Colby

Squash wins vs. Wesleyan 5-4, 9-0 vs. NYU, lose to Dickinson 0-9

Women’s Results

Ice Hockey loses vs. Hamilton 0-2, 1-2, tie vs. Bowdoin 0-0

Basketball wins vs. Colby 67-65, lose vs. Bowdoin 75-96

Squash wins vs. Wellesley 8-0, lose to Colby 4-5

Upcoming Events

February 21st, Men’s Swimming NESCAC Championship @ Middlebury

February 22nd, Men’s & Women’s Track & Field Indoor New England Championship @ MIT

February 23rd, Women’s Ice Hockey @ Middlebury

Staff Recs

Media and journalism recommendations from the staff of *The College Voice*

Max Amar-Olkus:

“Journalism Isn’t Dying. It’s Returning to Its Roots” *WIRED*. In the wake of massive layoffs at leading digital media companies such as the Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, and Vice, many have been quick to proclaim that journalism— especially in the digital age— is a dying field. Issues related to revenue sources and claims of “fake news” plague outlets today. But though traditional “objectivity-based” journalism seems to be faltering, highly partisan sources are flourishing on both sides of the political spectrum. This piece theorizes about how early newspapermen such as Benjamin Franklin or Samuel Adams would view the current media landscape, and concludes that they’d likely recognize the highly partisan, ad-fueled turn that digital media outlets have taken.

Dana Gallagher:

“Progressive Prosecutor’: Can Kamala Harris Square the Circle?” *The New York Times*. Kamala Harris portrays herself as a progressive candidate based on her record as California’s Attorney General. But she has earned the ire of skeptics who contend that her positions on the death penalty and criminal justice reform while in office were less than progressive.

Alex Klavens:

“The Valedictorians Project.” *The Boston Globe*. A five-part series on what came of valedictorians at different Boston public high schools, and how different schools within the same school system set students on drastically different paths.

Grace Amato:

“U.S. Masses Aid Along Venezuelan Border As Some Humanitarian Groups Warn Of Risks.” *NPR*. As the crisis in Venezuela continues, U.S. Humanitarian Aid has become politicized. As the U.S. sets up aid on the border because Maduro will not allow American aid trucks to cross the border, the use of aid is two fold. On one hand, it is meant to help the Venezuelan citizens during the cruel dictatorship that restricts access to food, medicine and other basic needs. On the other hand, placing aid on the border is meant to entice Venezuelan border officials to disobey Maduro and bring in aid against their orders to begin to push him out of power. Additionally, the United States sanctions against Venezuela blocks the sale of Venezuelan oil to the U.S., of which the proceeds are used to import food and medical supplies, only worsening the crisis. Among the politicization of humanitarian aid, it is important to remember that “humanitarian action needs to be independent of political, military or any other objectives” and instead increase aid depending on the “needs of the people.”

Police Identify Voyeurism Suspect, Say There Were More Incidents Than Previously Reported

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

the College's Title IX coordinator. Chief Reichard says the College has cooperated with the police investigation, but it is unclear what information was shared by the College. Manning said NLPD previously requested digital information for a digital forensics investigation. Manning has also said that the College's internal investigation did help narrow down possible suspects. But Reichard said the College did not play a role in detectives making initial contact with the suspect and that the suspect had made themselves available to police. It is unclear, what role either police or College investigators played in actually identifying the suspect.

A Feb 7, 2019 college-wide email signed by Manning and Campus Safety director Mary Savage informed the campus community that "the College has moved to separate the individual from the campus pending further action by police."

For months, the "shower incidents" have stumped investigators and have scared students. Between October 2018 and January 2019, five students reported being photographed while in shower changing areas. Four of those incidents occurred in Plant House bathrooms, and one occurred in Morrison house, a first year dorm. Though police have said these five reported incidents were among others discovered during an ongoing digital forensic investigation, it is unclear how many more incidents may have occurred.

Some students who live in Plant House began to use a "bathroom buddy system," according to one Plant resident. Multiple Plant residents

have also said that one Plant House communal bathroom was given a locking mechanism to make it a private bathroom. But those students also expressed concern that if someone didn't lock the door, a potential aggressor could then lock themselves inside with someone else.

After the fourth incident occurred in December, Grace Amato '21 and Devon Stahl '19 initiated a Facebook-based campaign called "Take Back Our Showers" in an effort to pressure the administration to take action. In a statement responding to the announcement that a suspect has been identified, Amato and Stahl said "this is a promising development." They believe it is insufficient, however, saying that the College community "also needs to address the ways we are all complicit in contributing to an environment where this can even happen in the first place."

Neither police nor the College have named the suspect, only describing the individual as a 20 year-old male student. Since NLPD and the College announced that a suspect had been identified, rumors have circulated throughout the campus community as to who that suspect is. The College Voice has not been able to independently confirm the identity of the suspect.

Amato and Stahl have said they "hope a public release of the suspect's name will give some peace and justice to the victims of the incidents." •

If you wish to share any information that may be relevant to this developing story, please reach out to The College Voice at (email) or Alex Klavens at aklavens@gmail.com.

Safety and Security in Off Campus Housing

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

ment in question— Blake O'Neal '19— went outside after seeing a suspicious looking man walking around River Ridge Road. O'Neal spoke to the man, who witnesses say was likely drunk, as he casually walked towards the Coast Guard Academy. The man was quickly identified as the assailant and Willey called Campus Safety once more at 4:59am and remained on the phone with them for three minutes.

In an email alert about the incident later that day, Director of Campus Safety and Emergency Operations Mary Savage and Assistant Dean for Residential Education and Living Sara Rothenberger reported that Campus Safety and the New London Police responded "immediately" but were unable to find the suspect. The residents of the apartment rejected that claim and reported that two Campus Safety officers arrived approximately fifteen minutes after their first call was placed, and they described their behavior as "slightly better than hostile."

After arriving, the residents say the Campus Safety officers demanded to know why the residents had not detained the man and were angry that they did not know the intruder's name. "They didn't even ask if we were okay," Purdum told the *Voice*. The residents also reported that the Campus Safety officers had refused to listen to them as they tried to tell them which direction the man was walking in. "He's going towards the Coast Guard Academy," Willey remembers telling the officers, who ignored her advice, and instead told backup officers, and the NLPD who arrived shortly after them, that the suspect was heading towards the Winchester Apartments.

In an email to other residents of the Ridge apartments, those at Ridge 5 described their experience in hopes of organizing for better security.

They also described the confrontational way that Campus Safety interacted with them, writing the following:

"It was up to the members of Ridge 5 to provide a clear and coherent account to the police, who at the time had been directed towards the Winches despite repeated efforts to tell Campus Safety that he [the suspect] had walked South down the highway. Despite their blatant fear, Campus Safety repeatedly interrupted the investigation to blame the residents for having left the door unlocked. This behavior continued until the residents were defended by the New London Police who stated that the locks on Ridge Road couldn't stop anyone from entering the Ridges. Before they left, the New London Police urged us to only reach out to them from this point forward as they fear for the safety of not only us, but everyone on this side of the highway."

The residents of Ridge 5, most of whom are seniors and are experienced in organizing on campus, provided a list of demands in their email and urged their neighbors to forward it to high ranking administration members such as President Bergeron and Dean Singer, among others.

"Our requests are reasonable and standard for any student that puts their trust in their college," they said in the email. "First we ask for dead-bolt locks to be placed on the front doors of each Ridge; second we ask for the back doors to be secured; third we ask for cameras to be introduced; fourth we ask for another safety blue light to be introduced to the Ridges; and fifth we ask for a sign to be erected indicating the Ridges as private property."

Their final demand is most blistering of all, however. "We demand that students living in the Ridge apartments be instructed to call the police

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Safety and Security in Off Campus Housing

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over Campus Safety, as Campus Safety could not be there in a timely fashion.”

The first response they received from an administrator came later on Sunday from President Bergeron, who informed the residents that Director of Campus Safety and Emergency Operations, Mary Savage, and Assistant Dean of Residential Education Living, Sara Rothenberger, would be arriving at their apartment shortly to meet with them.

Residents report being in Coffee Grounds at the time this message was received, and all getting in a car to drive down to River Ridge Road—a trip that they say took all of 5 minutes to make, including a stop at the red light on Route 32.

They described their interaction with Rothenberger and Savage as positive and reassuring, and noted that they were the first ones to seem genuinely empathetic. The two administrators walked around the apartment, taking note of security issues such as broken windows or malfunctioning locks—problematic flaws that the residents of Ridge 5 claim they have submitted work orders for in the past. Rothenberger and Savage promised the residents that Facilities would come and install deadbolt locks on their doors in the days to follow, and they did so on Wednesday Feb 13.

The demands of Ridge 5 were heard by not only administrators and neighbors, but also by the Student Government Association’s Executive Board. On Sunday, Feb 10 the board discussed the urgent issue of student safety, and the following day Jamila Ezbidi ‘19 and Morgan Fowle ‘19 met with Dean Norbert and Dean Arcelus to lay out the students’ demands. The two SGA

representatives stressed the fact that students were disappointed and very concerned about the Campus Safety response, and about the fact that the NLPD urged them to reach out to them directly next time a situation like this happened. According to Ezbidi, Dean Arcelus stressed that at the end of the day, it’s up to students to decide who to call, and that they are encouraged to call the NLPD if they see the need to do so.

The SGA representatives asked the deans for a concrete timeline regarding infrastructural changes and were informed that within the week facilities would start to change locks and install deadbolts.

Additionally, Dean Norbert and Arcelus assured Ezbidi and Fowle that Campus Safety and the NLPD were going to begin additional patrols in the Village and that Director Savage was working with Facilities on installing new blue safety lights at the Ridges.

“Unfortunately, as we have seen this past weekend, the steps which have been implemented are not sufficient and were not enough to prevent another robbery,” Ezbidi told the *Voice*, referring to a robbery that occurred at Winchester apartment 8 between 10:30 and 11:00pm on Friday, Feb 15 in which a television and a game console were stolen. According to witnesses, the NLPD arrived before Campus Safety, who took approximately thirty minutes to arrive on the scene.

“This puts student safety at risk and has to be addressed immediately,” said Ezbidi. “Our next steps include avenues of conversations gathering student input and opinion on enhanced safety strategies, including options such as card access swipe door locks across the street [Route 32] as well as cameras. We are beginning by having a meeting with Ridge 5 residents, as well as mem-

bers of Winch 8, and will be gathering wider input from students across campus.”

In an email alert the morning after Winch 8 was robbed, Mary Savage and Sara Rothenberger described the steps being taken to enhance security for independent style living spaces. They explained that Facilities was in the process of changing all exterior door knobs so that they are always locked when doors are closed, in addition to adding deadbolt locks to doors that don’t already have them. Further, they stated that Facilities would begin working on enhancing outdoor lighting and installing another emergency blue light phone in front of the River Ridge apartments.

Savage and Rothenberger also stated that the NLPD is adding patrols to the area and that Campus Safety and Information Services were working with outside vendors on installing security cameras to exterior areas in the Village.

This campus is not unfamiliar with break-ins. In December of last semester, there were 5 separate reports of unauthorized entry at the 191 and River Ridge apartments *in just one night*. Campus Safety allegedly responded immediately but could not find the suspect.

The unauthorized entries and robberies that occurred in the last week have produced campus-wide discussions about security and the competence of Campus Safety when it comes to emergency situations. For some, the recent steps taken by administrative members are sufficient and encouraging.

Others, like Shelby Purdum of Ridge 5, feel entirely let down. Reflecting on the terrifying experience and the way her and her roommates were treated in the immediate aftermath, Purdum told the *Voice*, “I’m never calling Campus Safety again.” •

Trump Declares National Emergency

DANA GALLAGHER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

In declaring a national emergency on Feb 15, President Trump sought to highlight the gravity of what he calls a national security crisis along the U.S. border with Mexico, while at the same time downplaying claims that he subverted constitutional checks on the executive branch. The president and his advisers portrayed the emergency declaration as a routine move by the executive branch to redirect money Congress has authorized, just as

previous presidents have done dozens of times. “We’re going to confront the national security crisis on our Southern border, and we’re going to do it one way or the other,” he said in a televised statement in the Rose Garden just 13 hours after Congress passed a spending measure without the money he had sought. “It’s an invasion,” he added. “We have an invasion of drugs and criminals coming into our country.”

A declaration of National Emergency will allow President Trump to redirect money from the Defense

Department and the Treasury to supplement the \$1.375 billion Congress authorized for the wall. The extra money would then permit the administration to build more than 230 miles of border barrier, rather than the 55 miles lawmakers had previously approved. “This is authority given to the president in law already,” acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney told reporters. “It’s not as if he just didn’t get what he wanted so he’s waving a magic wand and taking a bunch of money.” President Trump himself has claimed that he “was going to be

signing a national emergency and it’s been signed many times before,” he said. “It’s been signed by other presidents. From 1977 or so, it gave the presidents the power. There’s rarely been a problem. They sign it. Nobody cares.”

Research compiled by the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law, however, indicates that no previous use of emergency power since the Carter

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Mike Kmec's Lawyers Get Court Deadlines Postponed, Claiming Medication May Have Influenced Embezzlement

ALEX KLAUVENS
NEWS EDITOR

Lawyers for Michael Kmec, the former Connecticut College Director of Auxiliary Services who pleaded guilty last November to embezzling money from the College, a charge that carries a penalty of up to 20 years in federal prison and an up to \$250,000 fine, are now claiming that Mr. Kmec's actions may have been impacted by prescription medication use. Mr. Kmec was originally scheduled to be sentenced on Feb. 12, 2019, but a federal judge has now granted multiple extensions on various deadlines including his sentencing date.

In a Jan. 17 motion, Mr. Kmec's defense team claimed that Mr. Kmec's doctor "recently indicated that [Kmec's] actions, in this case, may have been impacted or resulted by medication prescribed." The motion says this information would be relevant to a presentence investigation report, a document that provides historical context of a convicted defendant during a sentencing hearing.

Mr. Kmec's defense team requested extensions on various court deadlines, including Mr. Kmec's sentencing date, saying they are "investigating these claims to ascertain the applicability to his actions and impact at sentencing." They claim that Mr. Kmec's medical providers "have indicated that this will require additional time, thereby delaying an opportunity to respond to the presentence investigation report." Mr. Kmec's defense also mentioned the possibility of "an independent examination and forensic expert review."

According to court documents relating to *United States of America v. Michael Kmec*, Mr. Kmec "devised and intended to devise a scheme to defraud the College and students of the College, to obtain money and property by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations and promises."

In his 12 years at the College, Mr. Kmec rose up through staff ranks, eventually becoming Auxiliary Services director in 2014. That same year, the College nominated Mr. Kmec for a Connecticut Higher Education Community Service award. In 2017, College president Katherine Bergeron honored Mr. Kmec with the Presidential Staff Recognition "Inspiration" award.

Beginning with his promotion to Auxiliary Services director in 2014, Mr. Kmec combined a rising star reputation with intimate access to college accounts to cover up a myriad of embezzlement schemes.

Prosecutors said that Mr. Kmec defrauded the College of \$157,495 through multiple illegal schemes. Mr. Kmec allegedly created a limited liability company called Decal Graphics of Connecticut LLC in 2016. Through fraudulent invoices and payments between the College and Decal Graphics, Mr. Kmec stole \$100,576. In another scheme lasting between 2015 and 2018, Mr. Kmec fraudulently stole \$24,872 through fraudulent invoices sent to a company called Connecticut Business systems.

He allegedly stole another \$23,763 through various fraudulent reimbursement schemes involving "services or royalty payments." Prosecutors also said that Mr. Kmec diverted \$8,282 from the Camel Card office to his own accounts and misappropriated a laptop worth about \$1,486.

Mr. Kmec also allegedly stole directly from students. Prosecutors said the College's bookstore contractor, Follet Corporation, had issued checks containing "money that it owed to students who no longer had Follet accounts." Mr. Kmec allegedly deposited about \$14,029 from those checks into his own accounts.

This latest request for extensions is not Mr. Kmec's first. In a Nov. 26 motion, Mr. Kmec's defense requested extensions because Mr. Kmec's lawyer, Raymond M. Hassett, might struggle to meet with his client during the holidays. The motion says Mr. Hassett would be "out of the State, and unavailable until January 2, 2019, celebrating the holidays with family." That request resulted in some extensions, including Mr. Kmec's sentencing hearing being postponed to March 14, 2019.

Mr. Hassett has not responded to a request for comment.

Mr. Kmec is now scheduled to be sentenced in Federal District Court in Hartford by Judge Michael P. Shea on April 17, 2019. Mr. Kmec is released on \$50,000 bond and is not allowed to leave Connecticut. •

Trump Declares National Emergency

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

administration parallel that of President Trump's declaration. Presidents largely declared national emergencies to impose sanctions on foreign officials and groups — freezing their assets and preventing Americans from doing business with them — because of human rights violations, terrorism or transnational narcotics trafficking.

Congress has also enacted a statute that gives presidents, during times of declared emergency, the power to redirect military construction funds to build projects related to that use. Mr. Trump is relying upon this specific statute to justify the construction of his wall and claim that he is exercising the very presidential powers envisioned by lawmakers. But, in a briefing with reporters, the White House identified only two previous instances in which presidents relied on emergency powers to secure funds for something different than what Congress had appropriated them. Both instances involved military construction associated with wars: President George H. W. Bush's Persian Gulf War emergency declaration and President George W. Bush's emergency declaration after the Sept. 11 attacks. Neither declaration allocated funds toward projects that Congress had previously rejected.

Checks against the abuse of emergency powers by the Executive branch have weakened since the 1980s. After a 1983 Supreme Court ruling presidents gained the power to veto Congressional resolutions that overruled declarations of National Emergency. Today, legal scholars say that self-restraint on the part of the executive branch is the most powerful tool of curbing abuse. Modern presidents have largely self-regulated and not invoked emergency powers to achieve policy goals Congress had rejected.

Much of the criticism that President Trump centers on the precedent he has created—that both Democrats seeking to further liberal agendas and Republicans pushing for conservative policy measures may push the boundaries of presidential power. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has already warned the GOP that the next Democratic President may declare a national emergency on guns.

Here at Conn, students remain divided over whether Presidents should self-regulate their use of emergency powers. "It's important that presidents have the authority to act quickly and respond to natural disasters," says Natalia Lipkin '19. "We needed President Bush to respond quickly to 9/11, and he was able to do that through use of emergency powers. But the office of the president has become so politicized now that it's hard to access whether power should be restricted." Guin Feldman '19 concurs. "Like many Conn students, I believe that president can play an essential role in addressing natural emergencies and should act immediately in times of crisis. I do worry that if a president begins to use executive powers too much, it undermines the structure of a democracy." •

Adjunct Professors are Valuable (But Underpaid) Tools

WALTER STUART
CONTRIBUTOR

Adjunct professors across the country are disproportionately compensated for their work compared to visiting and full-time faculty. The average adjunct nationwide will make somewhere between \$20,000 and \$25,000 a year, according to a report done by *NPR* in 2013. Usually, this requires working at multiple institutions due to the limitations on the number of courses an individual can teach at any given university or college. Adjunct professors at Connecticut College are limited to teaching 3 courses in an academic year and are paid a flat rate of \$5,800 per course. Due to the limitations on the number of hours that adjuncts work, they often do not receive certain benefits from the College, including health-

care and insurance. Adjuncts on campus are hired for a number of reasons but generally are used to replace professors absent on sabbatical or to fill a specific department need. According to Dean of Faculty Jeffrey Cole, the College hires adjuncts to fill around 15 percent of the faculty on campus.

While adjuncts can only teach 3 courses before the College is required by federal law to give them more benefits, full time and visiting professors are generally expected to teach somewhere between 4 and 6 courses in an academic

year.

One concern about the system as it currently stands is the decision-making and hiring process in regards to new professors. Derek Turner, a philosophy professor who previously served as the department chair, shared similar concerns in his Dean of Faculty candidate statement. Turner wrote about

limitations but believes that the College can do more.

It is cheaper for the college to hire multiple adjuncts, making them a valuable tool for the College to fill out departments. One current adjunct professor on campus, who requested anonymity for this article, worked as an adjunct for more than 4 years here at the College. They noted that the

saying “Administration has become bloated and campuses have become nicely manicured corporate parks. [Campuses are] supposed to be places of learning but have become increasingly managerial.” Many of these professors need adjunct jobs to pay the bills but, without job security, they face professional challenges.

Chances are that most students will have one or more classes with adjunct professors during their time at Connecticut College. According to the anonymous adjunct professor, “students often feel that adjuncts aren’t giving them what a full-time professor would be able to,” which both Cole and Turner assured was not the case. Cole mentioned that while adjuncts are hired as temporary staff, they also can provide a different perspective.

“Most are working professionals, who can demonstrate to students the real-life applications of their respective disciplines while enjoying the experience of interacting with our curious and hard-working students,” Cole claims. Cole went on to mention adjunct professors that come from Pfizer to teach year after year. Turner reaffirmed his experience working with adjuncts, saying that many of them have been able to provide the same quality teaching that himself or another full-time professor would have been able to. •

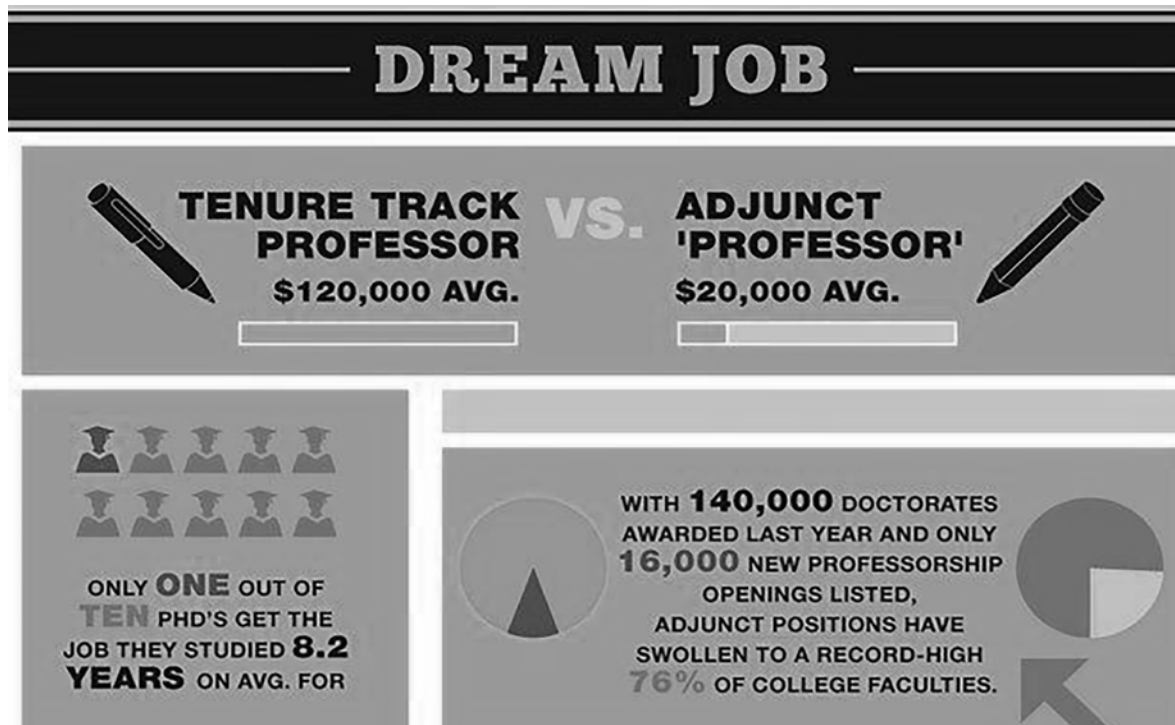


Image Courtesy of Vaughn R. Demont

his experience working with the previous Dean of Faculty when looking to hire new professors to fill 4-5 courses. “I asked for permission to hire a one-year visitor to teach all of those courses, and I had a willing and capable candidate ready to take the job.” Turner wrote. However, Turner “was told that [he] would have to hire multiple adjuncts so that the college would not have to pay fringe benefits.” Turner went on to mention his understanding of the budgetary

experience, overall, has been positive but still needs to be improved. On the topic of pay, the professor noted that the College pays much better than what their colleagues at other institutions receive; “I have a colleague working in Boston who teaches 6 courses, which no one does, just to pay rent. I receive a lot of support here compared to other places.” Despite the College’s standing amongst other institutions, this professor does believe that the system can be made better,

President Bergeron Reappointed to Second Five Year Term

SAADYA CHEVAN
MANAGING EDITOR

In an email to the College last week, Chair of the Connecticut College Board of Trustees DeFred G. Folts III '82 announced that the Board had unanimously voted for the reappointment of College President Katherine Bergeron to a second five year term. Bergeron has been College President for over five years now, since assuming the role on Jan. 1, 2014.

While I agree with the Board's decision to reappoint Bergeron to a five year term, and I believe that her overall leadership has been good for the College, I disagree with significant portions of the rationale Folts' wrote in the email. Below I have outlined and commented on what I agree, disagree and have no opinion on. I'd note that while it is likely Bergeron's level of involvement between initiatives varies dramatically, it is her leadership style and focus that ultimately leads to things getting or not getting done at this College.

Due to the length of Chair Folts' email I have made significant edits to highlight his most important points and save space. The full text of the email is available on *The College Voice's* website.

Good

Securing some of the largest gifts in the College's history...and leading the most successful fundraising year of all time.

Bringing Connecticut College into the American Talent Initiative, with its commitment to enroll and graduate 50,000 low-income students [across all members] by 2025.

The renovation of the Charles E. Shain Library... Championing the creation of a second cohort of Posse Scholars from New York City...

Adding value to the College's endowment, with new funds for our endowed centers and new endowed scholarships for low- and middle-income students. – Our endowment is growing as is the stock market.

Inaugurating a dual-degree program in environmental engineering in partnership with Worcester Polytechnic Institute. – Loads of Colleges have stuff like this. Bergeron likely deserves accolades for starting to get the rest of Connecticut College to get with the times.

Completing Building on Strength [the College's strategic plan]... – While I'm not sure if I agree with the strategy laid out in this plan, the Bergeron administration appears to have been consistent with committing to at least its initial implementation.

Supporting a 10-year campus sustainability plan... – I'm putting this in the good category because it actually lays out a specific plan with deadlines for steps the College will take to become more sustainable. You are welcome to disagree with me on the

grounds that these steps are not enough.

Moving our Office of Career and Professional Development to central campus... – Yes this is very needed! However, I'm not sure how necessary spending \$2 million and conducting renovations during part of the spring semester to move it is.

Supporting new approaches to financial aid... – Mostly in the form of merit scholarships. It does not seem to have helped Sean Soucy pay his comprehensive fee.

Creating the Presidential Staff Recognition Awards... – This will be a great program as long as the FBI doesn't continue to initiate investigations for felony level crimes against award recipients less than a year after they receive them. Full disclosure: I have a conflict of interest regarding Kmec's award because I was the lead author on a letter nominating someone else for the award he won the year he won it.

Launching the President's Distinguished Lecture Series to bring pre-eminent writers, speakers, and public intellectuals to campus. – Bryan Stevenson was on The Axe Files in December, and while he does a lot of great work with felons he has never been convicted of a felony.

Establishing the President's Council on Equity and Inclusion... – This committee has been meeting directly with Bergeron since January 2018. It's high level stuff.

Neutral

Supporting the launch of Connections, the College's signature approach to the liberal arts that fulfills our mission of putting the liberal arts into action. – I have in past years gone on the record as a supporter of the concept behind Connections, and I remain so. Unfortunately I've had several conversations with several faculty who have been involved in elements of the new First Year Seminars, Integrative Pathways, etc. this year where they tell me something around the lines of "I don't know what is going on here" that suggest that the implementation of Connections may be going through a bit of a rough patch currently. I suspect this is due to the majority of members of the Class of 2020, the first class to have full access to the modes of inquiry and integrative pathway system that replaced general education areas for us seniors, entering their junior year, and the College and faculty realizing that they need to somehow prepare the students in the Pathway system for engaging in and presenting some sort of independent work by November of this year. Whether I'll consider this a good move in the future or downgrade it further to a bad one will likely depend on how the College reacts to the success or failure of Class of 2020 students experiencing it

Leading the successful reaccreditation of Connecticut College by the New England Commission of High-

er Education [formerly NEASC]... – Any competent College administration should be able to achieve this. If Conn had failed to achieve this I might have had to add a "Really Bad" section.

Developing plans for revitalizing the College's historic Palmer Auditorium...[and] reactivating the College Center at Crozier-Williams. – I am not rating this until I actually see whether these plans actually "revitalize" and "reactivate." My two cents is the tangible impact of these renovations will come in the buildings' aesthetics and marketing.

Forming the Council of Former and Emeritus Trustees. – Reading in people with prior experience and knowledge to inform you on your leadership decisions is a good way to broaden your understanding of the Institution you are now in charge of. It's also bad for the same reason because it can allow old ideas and leadership styles to persist in new administrations when they really shouldn't.

Securing foundation funding to advance our work in developing promising faculty of color. – Conn has been so successful at developing promising faculty of color and other diverse faculty that they have failed to retain many of the same people they developed (e.g. Etoke, Baldwin, Baker, Manion).

Bad

...Among the first tasks undertaken [by the President's Council on Equity and Inclusion] were the creation of a new statement on freedom of expression and a new diversity action plan for the College. – Yeah despite what I said earlier about this Committee being high level, based on its actions in its first year of existence it doesn't look like it's a conduit for achieving quick change on this campus.

Opening the Otto and Fran Walter Commons for Global Study and Engagement... – Thanks to this renovation I now have to stare at the weird purple glow emanating from the entrance to Blaustein every night I bike from Cummings back to my room in central campus. It's as poor taste as you can get.

The conversion of Hamilton and Morrison to all-first-year residences. – I'm waiting to see a major renovation on a dormitory that's not for first years or is outside of the Plex. Also I chose this school because of the mixed-year housing and then got stuck in a hallway full of obnoxious freshmen; creating all freshmen dorms is just an ingenious way to magnify that experience for more people.

Possibly Erroneous

Forming the President's Leadership Council – I have never heard of this, it's not on the College's website and a Google search reveals nothing. Let your conspiracy theories run wild about why Folts mentioned this mysterious committee because it's more entertaining than the Leadership Council being a dumb mistake on a long email! •

I Hate the State of the Union

MAX WHISNANT
STAFF WRITER

The U.S. Constitution mandates only that the President “shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient.” This doesn’t mean an annual cloistering of our nation’s leaders within the walls of the Capitol. And yet, we do it every year.

The State of the Union: It’s a theater show falsely presented as a Constitutional requirement--complete with a captive audience filled with both friends and foes, pomp and circumstance disguised as tradition, and an administration’s accomplishments listed off in search of vindication. I hate it all. I find it nauseating and yet, I understand the appeal for politicians, namely presidents. The boosts to their ego, the bump in poll numbers, the pats on the back. The profits are negligible, but it’s a seductive and alluring power that can prove overwhelming.

Having just sat through Donald Trump’s second official State of the Union (SOTU) address, I have only convinced myself more that we can do without the fluff we have inflicted upon ourselves annually. There’s the façade of bipartisanship that is infuriatingly sickening, but is made worse coming from a President who openly disparaged Democratic leadership only hours before his performance began. He had every opportunity to, at least in part, recalibrate his tumultuous presidency, lay out a clear path forward for his administration, and expand his base to strengthen the fragile favorability ratings he currently enjoys.

By all accounts, the president proved a disappointment in accomplishing these goals. After a bruising and partisan battle during the record length government shutdown, Trump needed a significant bump in poll numbers, something he failed to accomplish with his speech. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel even called this particular speech “political malpractice” in an Op-ed published by *The Atlantic*.

I’m picking on Trump because he was the one to give the address this year and because he has vindicated his critics time and time again. That being said, he is hardly the only culprit. The official rebuttal from the opposing party feels the same. It is a job often called the “least glamorous in Washington.” Opposition parties find it impossible to match the grandeur of the SOTU. The Democratic rebuttal offered fewer theatrics, but it was no less predictable. On occasion, rebuttals provide meme-worthy gaffes such as Marco Rubio’s dry mouth one. Even Joe Kennedy, whose actual 2018 rebuttal was widely praised, got overshadowed by chapped lips. A flawless rebuttal is so rare that *FiveThirtyEight’s* Nate Silver joked that, should someone deliver a good response, “[the politician] should not only run for president but should probably just become president automatically.” If the most that a party can hope for is that its sacrificial lamb not completely bomb, I think that warrants us taking a look at how our leaders address the nation.

Until we realize this, I suggest an alternative to the State of the Union address. Ideally, the address would be written and handed into Congress with no pageantry. But, that is both unrealistic and

unreasonable. Let’s face it: the SOTU is a gift to the president and it should go. I would have the president deliver an address from the Oval Office with no live audience and the opposition’s rebuttal following right after with the same conditions. A straightforward address gives less room for error and removes a major design flaw in the structure of the SOTU: the audience. Without the audience, there is no room to hide and, in theory, the amount of pandering will go down.

In such polarized times, we have to adapt. Politically expedient events like SOTU feed disillusionment and are counterproductive to the American experiment. By listening to the SOTU and the response every year, we get stuck in an echo chamber filled with thoughtless excuses to hate the other side. We’ve become lazy because it’s easy. Held captive every year by the president, we fall back in love every year. It’s a case of political Stockholm syndrome and we have it bad. The sooner we realize this the better.

Worrying about the state of our country cannot be misconstrued as a partisan issue. It’s OK to care. We’re so quick to see Red or Blue that we ignore the shades of purple that drag us back together. We’ve forgotten that we are a country whose imperfections make us better. As long as we learn from our mistakes, we can hold our heads high. Improving requires that we examine our flaws. In doing so, we push ourselves to new heights.

I might hate the SOTU, but the state of our Union is strong. When we break through the partisan gridlock corrupting the halls of the Capitol building and our own minds, we can be exceptional. Leaving behind a legacy of redemption should be our new goal. At times, coming together may seem fruitless, but that is why we must try. In order to create a culture that will outlive us all, cooperation on both sides is essential. If we don’t figure this out, we risk regressing, but I think we are all up to the task. We’re long overdue for a fresh start. Let’s tear it all down. •



Image courtesy of WSB Radio, Debbie Lord

Senior Spotlight: Honor Council Chair Alison Joyce

CAMERYN LESKO-JELLEY
STAFF WRITER

Connecticut College senior Alison Joyce is one of the most multifaceted individuals on campus. She is a psychology and sociology double major, with a love for dogs, improv, the television show *Big Mouth* and her mother's homemade black bean enchiladas. However, much of Joyce's life is centered around her involvement with extracurricular activities on campus. She states that "I love my academics and I have been so lucky with all my professors, but my experience at Conn has been very much my extracurriculars." Joyce isn't only a member of a handful of clubs and organizations on campus, she holds a leadership position in almost every club that she is involved in.

Joyce is one of the presidents of N2O (Conn's short form improv group), she is the independent living coordinator for the Winch houses, the Chair of Honor Council making her a member of the Student Government Association Executive Board, a Senior Admission Fellow and a director of the Women's Empowerment Initiative.

Joyce felt prompted to get very involved in extracurriculars at Conn after she found herself bored in her dorm room watching *Friends* during her first couple weeks at college and began to realize that this wasn't the life that she wanted for herself during her college years. Joyce claims, "I went into the activity fair freshman year, and just signed up for as many things as possible." N2O was one of the first clubs Joyce joined. Although she was hesitant at first to give it a go, the mentorship that she received from the upperclassmen in the club was unparalleled. She has also been a part of the Honor Council since freshman year, and as with N2O, was initially nervous to ascend into a leadership role with the Honor Council. Joyce claims that this is "because [she] didn't want to paint [herself] as some moral queen," but soon got over this and found the members of SGA to be some of the "hardest working people on campus, and the students who really fight for other students' rights and the well-being of campus." As Conn's shared governance relies on a genuine effort to have student representation, Joyce believes that honor council "is an incredible opportunity for students to have a platform and bring attention to the issues and concerns of other students." Joyce states that through her position on honor council she has persistently tried to "be an advocate for her peers, which has been a very gratifying experience."

Another fundamental position that Joyce has held for the past three years is as a member of the Residential Education and Living (REAL) staff. Joyce states that "being a sophomore and having freshman trust you with their problems and emotions is a surreal experience at first."

But out of all that Joyce is involved in at the college, she believes that her work with the Women's

Empowerment Initiative (WEI) has been her biggest contribution to the Connecticut College community. Joyce says that as a director of WEI "[she has] been so honored to serve as the point person for women and non-binary folks for the pieces I have directed." She goes on saying that "it is so incredible to have these beautiful pieces of work that took people such courage to write, come to life in the final performance."

Although Joyce's four years at Conn have been full of many wonderful experiences, and she has loved being surrounded by some of the "absolute best, passionate, compassionate, caring and hard-working people," she has had to overcome a number of challenges. During her sophomore year, Joyce struggled with her mental health. She realized that during this time in her life, she wasn't prioritizing her health, well-being and happiness. She learned that she really needed to take control of her life, and is now even working on a TedX talk about mental health (for Conn's TedX club).

Furthermore, during her first year at Conn, Joyce's friend was killed in a drunk driving accident--news that was beyond devastating and heartbreaking. However, whenever Joyce feels disheartened about life or college, she remembers the amount of support she and others received during this unbearable time and knows that genuine kindness exists on this campus. "Whenever I have struggled, or have had problems, my friends and peers have always gone the extra mile to make me a functioning, thriving person."

With graduation right around the corner, Joyce has begun the job searching process and is currently interviewing for a lot of different jobs ranging from sales to psychology to tech related jobs. She hopes to live in New York or Boston next year and ultimately wants to go to grad school after working for a few years.

Joyce is genuinely excited to travel around and meet new people and has the goal of making people laugh along the way. However, she knows that she will be far from of the people

who she loves the most, which is making her savor the time she has left living and constantly being around all her friends at college even more.

Joyce states that it has been an "honor to meet so many amazing people here at Conn, and learn about their different passions, and what they are fighting for in life, I have truly been so lucky"--and the Connecticut College community has truly been so lucky to have Joyce. •

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It's All in the Name

PRICE DAY
OPINIONS EDITOR

I wrote an article last semester about this school's policy of Failure to Act, a policy that I see as unfair, unjust and a means for campus safety to write up students when none of their other numerous policy infractions apply. I thought maybe my article would resonate with the reasonable members of the administration at this school, or at least notify the school deans and campus safety that the student body is aware of their sketchy methods.

Boy was I wrong.

Since the beginning of the semester, a housefellow and popular campus community member has lost his job and college education over a Failure to Act charge, and a large number of frisbee team members have been hit with the same charge. This is extremely frustrating to me. For my last article, I interviewed Dean Cardwell about Failure to Act, and she informed me that "people aren't getting Disciplinary Probation for Failure to Act." Well, either the policy was changed in the past three months and no one was informed, or I got straight up lied to. I've spoken with frisbee team members, and at least three have told me that they received Disciplinary Probation/Warnings off a Failure to Act charge alone, a punishment Cardwell told me was not possible. At least one of these individuals received DP2, meaning they are one strike away from being suspended or expelled because they failed to report a party where Honor Code and/or Student Code of Conduct Violations took place. This harsh disciplinary treatment seems mind-boggling until you think about Sean Soucy.

Sean, who was a literal saint on campus (the guy knew everyone), was forced to leave the school because of a clause on his Housefellow contract closely resembling failure to act that stipulates he must report instances of policy infractions. His forced departure represents one of the most cold-blooded actions I've ever seen from a college that prides itself on putting student interests first. I would say that Cardwell betrayed me because of the untruths she told me in our interview, but I can't. Using the word 'betray' in that sense would mitigate its power and do a disservice to Sean, who has been grossly mistreated after giving his all to this school.

I hope this doesn't come as a surprise to any readers, but when I say the administration of this school doesn't give a fuck about you, look no further to the treatment of Sean Soucy. This school wants your parents' money, plain and simple. If Sean payed full tuition, he would still be a student here, albeit one likely on Disciplinary Probation. I know of full tuition students at this school who have committed multiple sexual harassments, been caught with criminal amounts of drugs in their room, or cheated on final exams. They receive a semester suspension, a probably hefty fine, and then they and their money are welcomed back to the Conn community with open arms. Do any of those things as a financial aid student and good luck packing your bags and applying to state schools. Money talks, my friends, money talks.

If anyone's looking for a real Failure to Act charge, take a look at how campus safety has handled the serious security breaches this school has suffered so far this semester. There have been two break-ins in the village and one robbery in the past couple weeks; accounts from residents of the apartments in both cases state that it took fifteen to thirty minutes for campo to respond. Max's article has much more of the specifics from

these cases so I redirect you to read it if you're looking for the details. A lot can happen in fifteen to thirty minutes when a home intruder is in the picture. Campus safety also doesn't seem to get along well with the New London police, who reportedly were on the scene of the robbery well before the campo van rolled up. I'm sure that all students here are familiar with the shower incidents during this school year, a case campus safety and Title IX investigators tried unsuccessfully to crack for months. They even tried locking the doors to dorms! It appears like the New London PD took only a few days to find a primary suspect once campus safety allowed them to investigate. It's almost as if campus safety and the administration don't know how to handle an actual police investigation.

Look at the name, "Campus Safety," and then look at their actions. They, and the administration that they work for, are extremely effective at getting college kids in trouble for a variety of policy infractions. And then fining them. They seem to be wholly ineffective, however, when the actual safety of students is on the line. This is a massive problem for a college to have, and they seem to be more concerned with keeping the real police far away from campus grounds.

It is entirely apparent after the events of the past few weeks, from the Ridges to the Winches to the Plant showers, that students are not safe on this campus, despite what the "Campus Safety bulletin" may say. I ask you then, Dean Cardwell, when a strange man is standing by your bed at 4 AM, who are you going to call? You only have fifteen to thirty minutes. •

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Tedious, Treacherous Tinder Tales: Are Dating Apps Worth It?

SARA ABBAZIA
CONTRIBUTORS

Let's say you don't have a date for Valentine's Day -- perhaps you just broke up with someone just in time for the holiday, or maybe you've been single for a long time now. Perhaps you've fallen victim to the hetero-patriarchal capitalist idea that one must participate in a monogamous romantic relationship in order to be truly happy. In any case, you may feel tempted to pick up your phone and try a new way to play with someone's heartstrings: online dating.

Sharon Van Meter, a junior History major, jokingly calls herself "a self-proclaimed Tinder expert." Indeed, in 2018 she met up with 8 different people that she had met on Tinder to give online dating a try. Unfortunately, her experience hasn't been all hearts and chocolates. In fact, Van Meter states that every experience she's had on Tinder has been "kind of bananas."

The longest relationship Van Meter had on Tinder lasted five days.

"He was like, 'Oh my god, you're unforgettable, you're one is a million,' and then he was like, 'I'm breaking up with you,' and I was just like, 'Okay. Cool.'"

Van Meter's experience with Tinder is pretty common. There are hundreds of websites, social media accounts, and books dedicated to failed Tinder experiences -- the Instagram page @byefelipe serving as an example of how particularly aggressive some people can be -- but why is it that electronic relationships fail to provide a spark for so many hopeless romantics?

"There's the element of anonymity," states Van Meter. "You only have a couple of pictures and a bio to go by, and people are much more confident to say whatever they want. You have no obligation to meet this person -- you can just talk to them all you want." Indeed, name-calling, harassment, stalking, and ghosting are made much easier due to the fact that the pressure of face-to-face interaction is almost entirely eliminated. Van Meter is not one to dwell on the negative, though. Instead, she decided to create an event where others could share their romantic escapades and flirtation flops. Thus, Tinder Tales was born.

One might believe that an event held on a Thursday night, with brutal winter winds blowing harshly outside, might not draw in a crowd -- especially considering that this Valentine's Day activity was anything

but romantic. Nonetheless, whether it was from the suspense of listening to stalker stories or simply because there was an open tab at Coffee Grounds, there was barely any standing room by 8:25 that evening.

The actors, all decked out in pink, recited various monologues anonymously submitted by Conn students. Each and every tale contained a suitor or experience that one has surely run into before on Tinder.

Perhaps you've met someone like "The Psycho Stalker," who tells his date that he doesn't have his driver's license because he's had "a tussle with the DMV." Maybe you've met the guy who brings his rabid dog on a date -- and when said dog bites and bruises the date, he simply monotonously states, "Boba. Stop that. Sorry, he's still very young." You've definitely met a guy like Zach, who takes chivalry way too far by racing his date to open the door, and visibly becomes upset when his date opens the door first. In this particular Tinder Tale, Zach asks his date to kiss him, and afterwards declares, "Wow. You're bad," and asks for a redo. I, for one, hope that Zach realizes that everything from his name to his outdated mannerisms screams adolescent insecurity. As comedian Chris Fleming once said, "That's not even an adult's name. That's a teenager's name. Unless you rode out of your mother's uterus on a BMX bike popping a wheelie, there's no excuse to be named Zach."

Is there any hope for finding love on Tinder? One Tinder Tale told the story of a Jewish girl finding a fulfilling relationship that was "anything but kosher." What's more, one of Van Meter's best friends found love on Tinder, and she thinks, "They're probably going to get married."

Additionally, Van Meter notes that dating apps are sometimes the only options for certain people, especially if one is queer or lives in a small town. "I'm bisexual, so it's harder to meet up with women in person," she says. "Tinder has helped me with that."

Still, she notes that she's had more failures than successes with the app. "Love is just a deeply personal thing for me. I think it's going to have to be someone I'm already friends with in the end."

Ultimately, if you don't have a date for Valentine's Day (or for the rest of the year), there's no reason to be sad. In fact, I would recommend that you jump for joy, hug your loved ones, and spin around in a circle with happiness. After all, if you had to pick between being single (and having a ton of friends that will love and support you no matter what) versus dating some "nice guy" that will belittle you in order to make himself feel better, the choice is obvious -- especially if that guy is named Zach. •

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Even Stripping Can't Save This Show

AMANDA SANDERS
STAFF WRITER

The Super Bowl halftime show is one of the entertainment world's biggest nights. Performers every year pull out the big guns. Lady Gaga made her mark by jumping off the stadium roof last year. Beyonce waded into politics with her Black Lives Matter statement at the 2016 performance. This year's performance--which was helmed by Adam Levine, Travis Scott, and Big Boi--was an unsurprisingly lackluster addition to an already dull Super Bowl. While Maroon 5 has certainly had some top hits over the last few years, no one ever claims that Maroon 5 is a favorite band. The band's music scores within the Billboard Hot 100, but it is rarely number one on the charts.

To its credit, Maroon 5 has remained relevant for almost twenty years and has a decent catalog of hits. Classics like "Harder to Breathe," "This Love," and "She Will Be Loved" are still popular along with more recent hits like "Girls Like You," "Moves like Jagger," & "Sugar." Levine's vocals without autotune were sweet, but thin. His attempts to spice up the show with awkward dance moves and the removal of his clothes led to some quality memes, but not a quality performance.

Maroon 5 was a bizarre headline choice given that the Super Bowl was played in Atlanta, one of the most racially diverse cities in America. Atlanta is known for its up and coming hip hop scene, but the halftime show featured only one performer from Atlanta--Big Boi. Big Boi's entrance as he rode up to the stage decked in a fur coat was a total scene stealer, but his appearance was short and quickly replaced with a half-naked Adam Levine. Travis Scott appeared briefly and, while his introduction by Spongebob Squarepants' "Sweet Victory" was heavily hyped, his heavi-

ly-bleeped performance of "SICKO MODE" and "Like a Light" left something to be desired.

While people did love the "Sweet Victory" shout out, many wished the Spongebob Squarepants segment had been a bit longer. Over 1.2 million people signed a petition to have "Sweet Victory" in full play at the 2019 Super Bowl in honor of the show's creator Stephen Hillenburg, who passed away earlier this year. The Super Bowl played a brief clip but not even Nickelodeon was impressed, tweeting a cheeky gif that stated that the network was looking for a little more.

Maroon 5, a seemingly bland and inoffensive band, faced some controversy for its Super Bowl performance. Rihanna was originally scheduled to perform at the Super Bowl, but turned down the offer to stand in solidarity with Colin Kaepernick, the former NFL quarterback. Kaepernick has not been signed to the NFL since 2016, when he began kneeling during the national anthem to protest racial inequality. Travis Scott also turned down the gig at first, but agreed to perform when the NFL decided to donate \$500,000 to the Dream Corps, a social justice advocacy group focused on fighting poverty. Maroon 5 then donated the same amount to Big Brothers Big Sisters, which is a youth mentorship organization. People

also commented on the fact that Adam Levine was able to strip off and show his nipples--something Janet Jackson was shamed for during her wardrobe malfunction at the 2004 Super Bowl.

It is safe to say that the 53rd Super Bowl halftime will not go down in the books as one of the greatest--but neither will the game itself. The halftime show is meant to be a spectacle of talent, dancers, and the best artists of the year. This year seemed to have none of that. •



Image Courtesy of Doug Mills/NYT



Image Courtesy of Chris Pizzello via Associated Press

Film Review: *Green Book*

ELIZABETH BERRY
STAFF WRITER

Green Book is about color -- green, white, and black. Green is in reference to the travel pamphlet used by Black Americans during the Jim Crow era, while black and white define the American racial binary explored in this movie.

The film, screened in Evans Hall in Cummings on Feb 8, won a Golden Globe for best comedy or musical and the Producers Guild of America's top film prize, putting the film on track for best picture at the 2019 Oscars. *Green Book* recounts the true events of pianist Doctor Don Shirley's (played by Mahershala Ali) concert tour in the deep South in 1962. Shirley, knowing he will need protection as he embarks on a two-month road trip during the Civil Rights and Jim Crow era, hires Vallelonga "Lip" Vallelonga (played by Viggo Mortensen) to be his chauffeur. The unlikely duo embark on a road trip during which they learn about each other, themselves, and the hateful world they live in. Through the eyes of writers Peter Farrelly and Nick Vallelonga (son of the real Vallelonga Lip), *Green Book* brings the audience on a humorous, yet serious journey through American identities in the sixties.

The opening sequence of the film follows Vallelonga going through his day (perhaps "night" is the more appropriate term) as he finishes his shift at a nightclub, returning just as his family is waking up. So far we have gathered that Vallelonga is a family man, bringing in money for his wife and two sons. He also happens to be an Italian living in the Bronx, which reminds me of the Italian/African-American tension in Spike Lee's 1989 film *Do the Right Thing*. This tension is made evident when Vallelonga returns home from a shift to find several male friends sitting on the couch watching baseball keeping Vallelonga's wife Dolores (played by Linda Cardellini) company as two Black repairmen fix an appliance in the kitchen. Although the TV is small and fuzzy, it appears that the four white men were cheering on the New York Mets, specifically Joe Christopher, Choo-Choo Coleman, Sammy Drake, Al Jackson, Sherman Jones, Félix Mantilla, and Charlie Neal. Ironically they're rooting for Black Mets players while not trusting the Black men fixing their friend's kitchen. The director cuts to the two repairmen drinking a cold drink Dolores has offered them and then back to Vallelonga's face as he watches the Black men sip from his cups. Vallelonga proceeds into the kitchen after the repairmen have left and places these two glasses into the trash can. Dolores finds the glasses after dinner and takes them out of the garbage with a look of disappointment on her face.

Green Book is filled with microaggressions towards African-Americans. During the road trip, Vallelonga pulls over to pee on the side of the road, which is in stark contrast to Shirley's polite, almost haughty mannerisms. The audience laughs at Vallelonga's man-in-the-wild persona, but gasps when he reaches for his wallet before leaving,

obviously an indicator of the racist urges he still harbors. As the movie continues, Vallelonga stops committing microaggressions and is instead able to see the outright racism Shirley must face each day. During a stop in some southern state, Vallelonga and Shirley go into a men's clothing store so Shirley can try on a suit. I immediately recalled *Pretty Women* as Shirley enters the store and asks to try on the suit, only to discover that he could not before purchasing it, according to the blatantly racist salesperson. Vallelonga is appalled by this response, while Shirley simply walks away familiar with being treated as the "other." And in another scene, during a break in a performance at an estate, Shirley heads to use the bathroom only to be told by the host that he needs to use the outhouse in the backyard. Such a scene is the epitome of irony in the movie -- here is a stellar piano player, recognized by President Kennedy himself, told to do his business in a wooden shack. Later, two cops pull the men over on the highway. Vallelonga, who has somewhat of an uncontrolled temper, punches one of the cops when he calls Vallelonga "half a n-word," due to his Italian background. Instead of just bringing in Vallelonga, the cops bring Shirley to the station as well. These microaggressions turn to outright racism when Shirley is not allowed to sit in a club's restaurant due to its policy and Vallelonga proceeds to use "The Negro Travelers' Green Book," a travel guide which lists all of the hotels that a Black person may stay in during their travels through the U.S.

Although the film has been advertised as providing a progressive commentary on racism, it has come under fire from racial justice advocates. Sona Rao addresses some of these criticisms in her article for *The Washington Post* "How 'Green Book' became this year's polarizing awards contender." Some feel the film "whitewashes a black experience by using the historic Negro Motorist Green Book, which existed to help Black people protect themselves while traveling in the South, as a 'mere prop.'" Although many find *Green Book* problematic for whitewashing an African American experience by telling the story through Vallelonga's perspective, I couldn't help but think about how this film shows the evolution of Hollywood. Three years ago, Damien Chazelle's *La La Land* met a similar response in that the film whitewashed the jazz scene; on some level *Green Book* corrects this. In *The Boston Globe*, film critic Ty Burr explains in his article "Going for a different sort of ride in civil rights-era South," that *Green Book* is "a movie built to flatter white audiences, who are meant to feel wiser and more evolved than Vallelonga even as they share his front-seat vantage point and cheer his evolution. That said, there's a whole other movie to be made about the view from the back of the car."

Even though there are obvious race and class divisions between the two protagonists from the start, a bond grows between the two men. Vallelonga saves Shirley from being brutally beaten by three men at a bar and helps Shirley avoid being arrested by cops for being caught in a relationship with a white male at a YMCA pool. These actions do show Vallelonga's

evolving friendship with Shirley that exceeds his obligations as Shirley's bodyguard. Yet, the portrayal of a white man "saving" a Black man is problematic.

The film portrays the communion between Vallelonga and Shirley through food--scenes that reveal the challenges of capturing interracial friendship on screen. Vallelonga, the classic Italian that he is, is constantly eating sandwiches, pizza, and pasta. When the duo enters Kentucky, Vallelonga pulls over to buy some fried chicken which he forces Shirley to eat, stunned that he has never had fried chicken before. This moment, although problematic as well as fried chicken has been stereotypically associated with Black communities, is the first moment of food communion between the two men. Unfortunately, the sentiment is lost when one of the venues Shirley performs at serves a "special" dinner for him: fried chicken and corn on the cob.

At this point, I am utilizing literary techniques from Thomas C. Foster's non-fiction novel, *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. Foster explains that rain is a form of baptism and rebirth. And, what do you know, there is a rain scene in *Green Book*! Vallelonga and Shirley get into a fight and Shirley demands that Vallelonga pull the car over. The fight continues as Shirley screams about what has been consuming his mind his whole life -- not being accepted by white society for his skin color and not being accepted by Black society because of his economic standing and cultured background. This is the reason Shirley drinks a whole bottle of wine each night -- to deal with the depression of not knowing where he fits in society.

Although African-American identity is the major focus of the film, other marginalized identities are represented as well. For example, Shirley's butler is Indian and there are a few Asian male characters pictured in the film either behind the counter or filling a bleek job. The cello player in Shirley's band is Russian and there are verbal exchanges between the men in Russian, as there are in Italian. The "other" takes on the role of servant -- with the exceptions of Doctor Shirley. Shirley's rise in society haunts him, as suggested when Vallelonga pulls over to fix the car in front of a plantation still being tilled by male and female Black workers. It is also important to mention the Italian-American identity, because Italian immigrants were not always accepted into American society when they arrived in Ellis Island, however easily assimilated as white Americans.

While not without its flaws, *Green Book* features poignant metaphors and strong acting that will make it an award contender. The piano emerges as a central backdrop to the story that resonates with musicians and nonmusicians alike. I myself trekked to piano lessons each week for eight-years, but I never really understood the beauty of this massive instrument. A piano is composed of *black and white keys*, creating melodious music to the ears of an audience, wherever and whoever they are. Shirley's instrument becomes a metaphor for hope -- despite our differences, humans come together through music. ●

Fyre Festival: Bringing Out The Worst In Advertising

EMIR KULLUK
BUSINESS MANAGER

The Fyre Festival is once again in the spotlight with the release of two documentaries--one from Netflix and one from Hulu--of the failed concert. The idea of having a music festival on “Pablo Escobar’s Private Island,” which has no infrastructure to withstand ten thousand people, soon crashed and burned when introduced by Billy McFarland, CEO of Fyre Media Inc, and rapper Ja Rule in 2017. The tickets cost several thousand dollars per person and the only amenities at the festival were disaster relief tents, wet mattresses and a piece of toast with cheese on it. Both documentaries discuss the unimaginable difference between the advertised festival and the end result, leaving the viewer to gape at the power of advertising.

The issue of advertising has been widely discussed in relation to Fyre Festival, with the festival being sold to the public through videos featuring some of the world’s top models. These models were filmed hanging out in yachts, drinking champagne, hanging out with pigs on the beach. In effect, they imply that the festival gives the average man the experience of a lifetime. Of course, this was not the end results. In fact, none of the models were present at the festival, and unless the definition of experience of a lifetime is to survive on a semi-built campsite, there was no such experience present either. After all of this, there have been several subpoenas for models like Kendall Jenner and Bella Hadid, who are accused of false advertising and luring people into what turned out to be a disaster. Some experts have questioned whether the models should testify for promoting the festival because they did not know what was happening behind the scenes. Even Brett Kincaid, the director from Matte Projects who was brought in to film the promotional material for the festival, says in the Netflix documentary that the festival did indeed happen; he then continues to say that it happened for the models and the people planning the festival. This all indicates that the models were not tricked by the people hiring them, but that they too believed in what they were promoting.

This leads to a bigger question at hand: Should the promoter be held responsible for the product’s performance? For example, if

Matthew McConaughey promotes a Lincoln car and a month later a Lincoln car accident takes place, does that mean Matthew McConaughey should be sued by whoever was affected? Or even a simpler example: if a product does not look the way it is, yet it is still sold to consumers, should a subpoena be given out?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you must consider how advertising is done from the ground up. Anything ranging from promotions of food products to cars or to online services do not look as good as or perform as well as they are advertised. Yet, we consumers still take this discrepancy between advertising and reality as something that is natural. No, it is not natural. Using mashed potatoes instead of ice cream in an ice cream ad to have the perfect scoops of ice cream is not loyal to the truth.

I am not saying that one should not film creative ads that hint at the function of the advertised product, or that we should just kill the way we do advertising nowadays. Companies, and not the consumers, should face the burden of notifying the public that an ad is not representative of a product. This practice is already taking place on a smaller scale on the social media platform Instagram as companies address the rise of social media influencers. Every time influencers advertise a product with a perfect, accompanying photo, they are required to put the hashtag #ad in the caption of the post. The same process should be implemented in commercial ads--commercials must clearly state

that an ad is a manufactured version of reality. This notification must be clearly expressed

because no consumer takes the time or is humanly capable of reading all of the small text that slides at the bottom of an ad. .

In the end, the Fyre Festival and the documentaries that have spawned off it have brought interesting topics to the forefront of public discussions. The fact that one of the event coordinators was ready to perform fellatio to bring water to the festival and the fact that Billy McFarland lied to investors to bring in more money all show the lengths people are willing to go to make something happen. Out of all this craziness, if there is one thing that the average person should take away is the power of advertising, and how it needs to be regulated. If not regulated, many Fyre Festivals will be lining up in the horizon. •

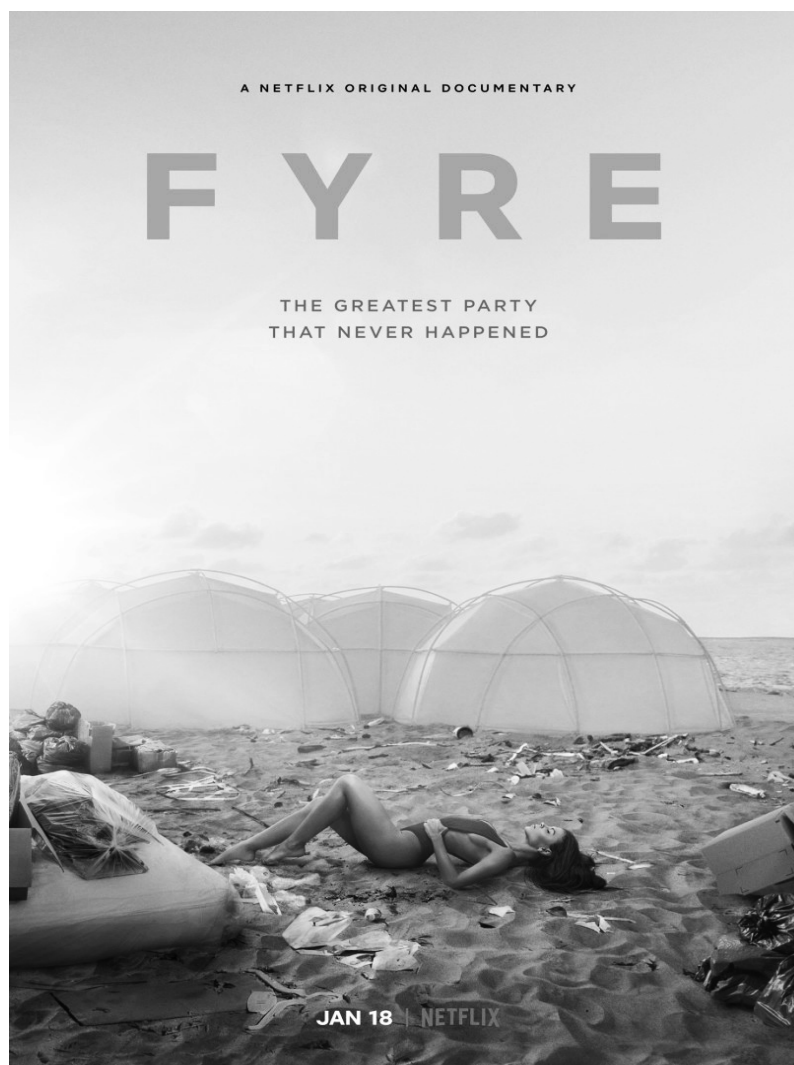


Image Courtesy of Netflix

Vice Review

SAADYA CHEVAN
MANAGING EDITOR

Adam McKay's *Vice*, a semi-comic film that chronicles the political ascension of Dick Cheney, very often feels like a leftist hit job. Yet, it is the film's winking acknowledgement of this shortcoming that keeps it from devolving into a completely partisan take. For example, an opening title sequence tells the viewer that the filmmakers really tried to tell the truth despite Cheney being one of the most secretive leaders in US history, and a mid-credits scene devolves into a fight between film viewers over conservative versus liberal biases.

I personally take the movie's allegations seriously but with a grain of salt; while I think it is certainly quite likely that some of the more outlandish parts really happened, I would be an idiot to believe all of the nonsense that is in there. In comparison, Daniel Ellsberg, the whistleblower who leaked the *Pentagon Papers* in 1971, told a coworker at the time of the release of Stanley Kubrick's *Doctor Strangelove*--the classic 1964 satire of the nuclear arms race between the US and USSR--that its portrayal of the US losing control of its nuclear arsenal was in essence a documentary of how close the world was to nuclear armageddon. Through that lens, it might not be outlandish to say that someone somewhere who has worked with Cheney agrees with some significant license that *Vice* as a Hollywood film takes.

The decision to highlight Cheney's role in the Bush administration -- a decade after his departure from office -- is interesting because the executive branch has continued to assert more power since Cheney's tenure. As *Vice* points out, Cheney, likely the most powerful Vice President in US history, certainly helped accelerate this trend. The power of the executive branch has been most apparent recently in President Donald Trump's decision to declare a national emergency in order to build a wall along the US border with Mexico. The influence of Trump's presidency on *Vice*'s filmmakers is occasionally referenced. One scene highlights C-SPAN footage of three politicians advocating for the Iraq War as members of Congress. They later become major influences in Trump's

ascent to the Oval Office: Mike Pence, Jeff Sessions and Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Nicholas Britell's soundtrack for *Vice* relies on counterpoint to convey a sense of dysfunction -- epic orchestral soundscapes are interrupted by contrasting accompaniment from other instruments. Sometimes works of classic American music pierce through. Specifically, in one rather irrelevant, false ending that muses on what Cheney's family life would have been like had he not become Vice-President, the



Image Courtesy of Plan B Entertainment

music seems to parallel the tune of "The Star Spangled Banner." In another scene late in the film, the music seems to paraphrase the Disney fanfare "When You Wish Upon a Star."

The film's portrayal of Cheney's rise to power from Yale dropout to Secretary of Defense for George H.W. Bush is excellent. Christian Bale's character transformation from congressional intern to all-business Vice President is particularly noteworthy. Also Amy Adams' portrayal of Lynne

Cheney as the brains behind her husband's rise to a progressively more powerful positions is well scripted and developed.

Unfortunately, the scenes focusing on Cheney's life after serving as Secretary of Defense are rather disappointing. The film's decision to already preview Cheney doing what we remember him best for -- encouraging the Bush administration to go to war in Afghanistan and Iraq and using torture to interrogate enemy combatants -- does not behoove itself to these scenes. They

seem like a rushed and poorly written recap of what we have already seen. Barely any time is devoted to Cheney's actions as CEO of the oil field service and equipment company Halliburton from 1995-2000, which would seem like a vital credit to the theory that the Bush administration invaded Iraq not because of flawed intelligence reports that Saddam Hussein's government was supporting terrorists but because of its large oil reserves.

In contrast, scenes earlier in the film that reference Cheney's dry bureaucratic approval of schemes to kill terrorists by bombing villages and torture prisoners for intelligence are immediately followed with visuals and sounds of those actions being carried out. It is a shocking gimmick that's effective and brilliant in showing the awfulness of the policies this man advocated. Because of how shocking it is to suddenly hear and see warplanes carry out a bombing, the filmmakers were wise to use these scenes only a few times in the film.

Viewing this film at the Garde Arts Center in New London, with its movie palace-sized screen and full surround sound system, the audience seemed to fly with the pilots of the planes as well--an effect that made the scenes brutally effective. Sometimes the audience would scream in horror at scenes like these and in other violent scenes like one about the infamous incident when Cheney shot a man in the face while hunting. Watching *Vice* with a larger crowd than I normally experience in a movie theater enhanced my experience of the horror that this film conveys. Overall, I think that the experience of viewing it at the Garde was good; however, given the film's political dynamics and poor concluding scenes, I'm less sure about the value of viewing it in other venues. •