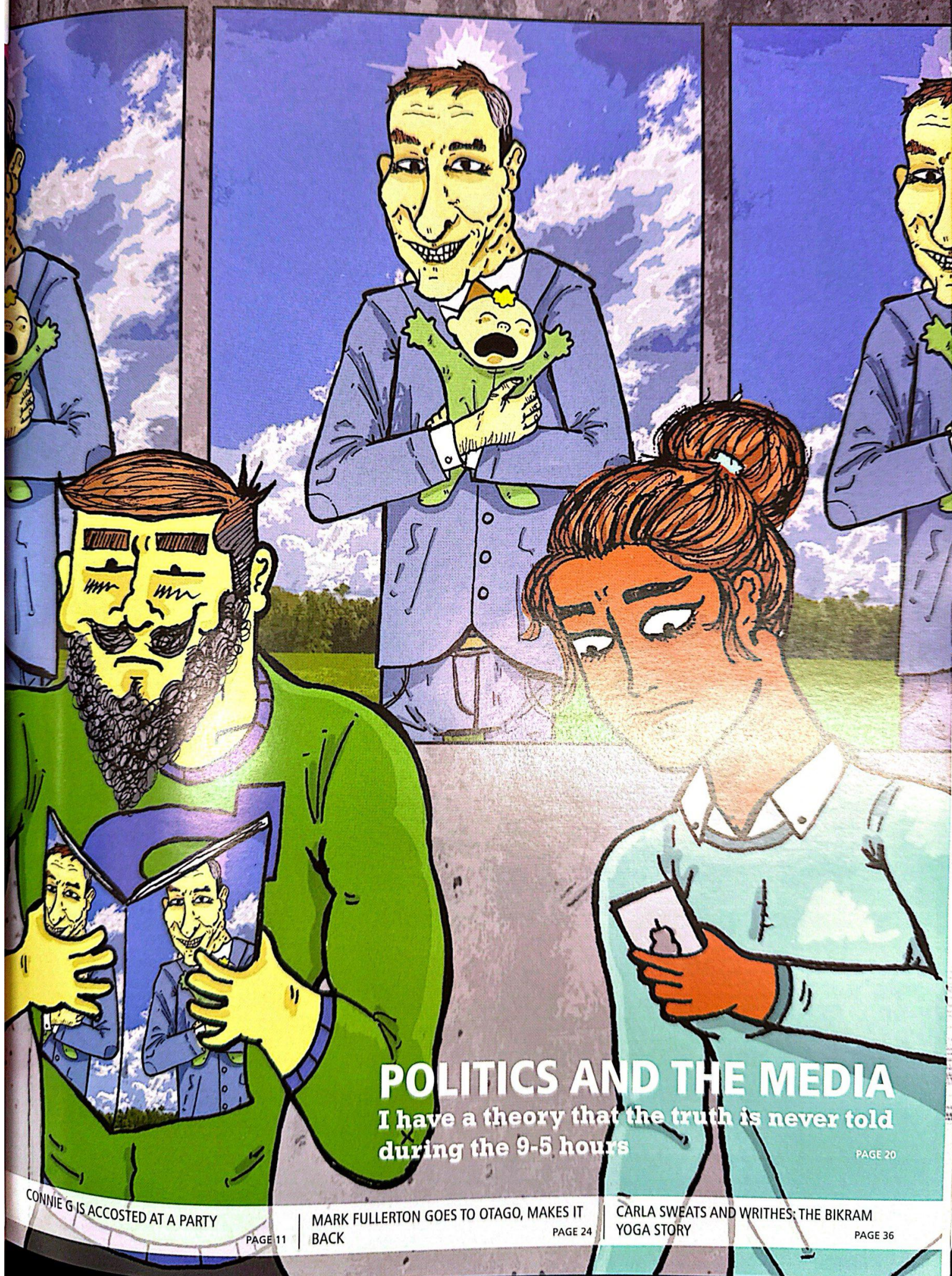


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## POLITICS AND THE MEDIA

I have a theory that the truth is never told during the 9-5 hours

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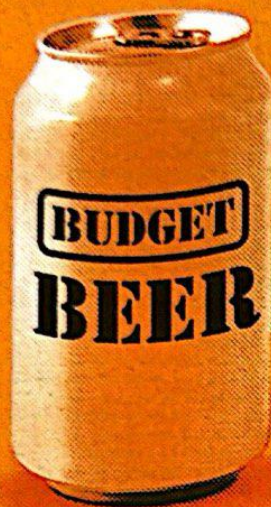
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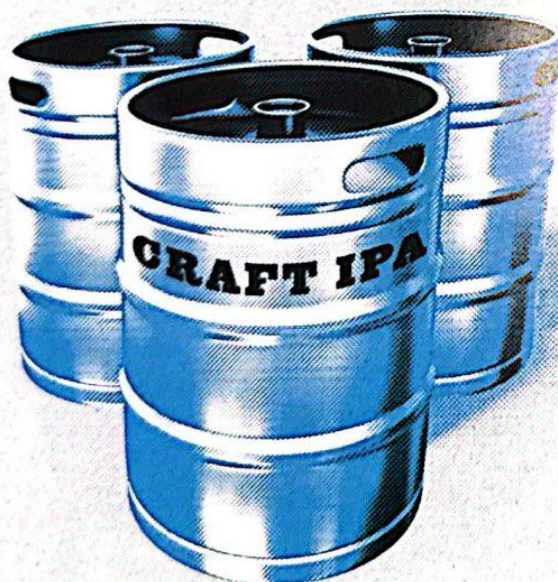
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# THE GREAT KIWI CONVERSATION.

BY JORDAN

Conversation is terrible in this country. People don't talk; they either grunt or get offended. Yes, that's a generalisation (see point three of four). I, being positive and constructive, have created a list of the culprits:

**The Fact Nazi:** we all know one, usually one of two demographics, the spotty faced computer nerd (read guy on 9gag or /a/reddit) or the fat conservative. These types love spouting 'fact'. "What do you mean saying that there are more Maori in prison than any other single group is racist!? It's a fact". Or "well it is true that most of the great advances in science were made by men." Or, less abhorrently, 'now no offence, I'm just being honest'. What do these three statements have in common? They are all total bullshit. They also claim to be telling the truth. Let's be honest, facts aren't great, mostly they're misused. Any philosophy student will tell you: a fact alone is just a premise; you haven't proven anything, fuckwit.

**The 'My Opinion' Brigade:** as much as I hate misuse of fact, misuse of opinion is even

more obnoxious, and even more prevalent. Yes, it may be 'just your opinion' that crystals have healing powers but, frankly, your opinion is moronic. It may well be 'your opinion' that, despite the fact you got a free education, our generation is bludging by wanting interest free student loans. But your opinion, you horrible old churl, is wrong. Stop telling me what your opinion is, and start making it a comprehensible one. Interestingly, this same lot crop up in the middle aged conservative demographic as well, who always get terribly offended when you disagree with them. "Well, it's my opinion that Helen Clark did run a lesbian conspiracy, and John Key is a totally responsible Prime Minister". That, you noxious-ameba-in-pinstripe-suit, may well be your opinion, but it's no less wrong.

**The Opinion Haters:** proving that the enemy of my enemy is not my friend, the Opinion Hater, on the other hand, is a close relation of the Fact Nazi. The other day, while giving my thoughts on some or other event, I was told off for 'editorialising' (giving opinion rather than just listing fact). Bigger off. All conversation is opinion. Take that as read, and respond accordingly. Robotically announcing truth claims is dull and pointless. Another favorite

of these pedants is the "oh that's a generalisation". Again, YES OF FUCKING COURSE IT IS, when we're trying to establish what we think about a certain group we have to generalise. Sure, not all Young Nats are spoilt obnoxious would-be-elites with more of daddy's money than sense, but most of them are.

**The Silent Majority:** most insidious of them all, usually male, probably plays sports. The DS doesn't like to chat. He doesn't like it over dinner and drinks, or coffee in the morning, or about politics, or money, or personalities, or university. He wants to sit in silence, occasionally cacophonize about the sweet tail from the weekend. He resents any and all attempts at discussion, let alone argument. The DS makes up most of the male population in this country, and should be wiped out (a policy which would also eliminate the patriarchy, the League fans, and Lion Red drinkers).

What does this Axis of Terrible Chat have in common? They're all boring, about as intelligent as the average starfish, and they're all kiwi. These 'facts' prove nothing. But they are worth thinking about.

"THEY'RE ALL BORING, ABOUT AS INTELLIGENT AS THE AVERAGE STARFISH, AND THEY'RE ALL KIWI."

# VULNERABILITY.

BY DENTON

**M**Y PHONE STOPPED WORKING WHEN I was overseas. It kept flashing that it was a "Samsung S3", as if I hadn't realised what type of phone I had used for the past 18 months. It kept happening at the most inconvenient times such as when I was alone in Manhattan trying to meet up with my group. I don't do well when things I own break. I get rather emotional. And irrational. I was two Snapchat story-worthy-pics away from throwing the phone into the frozen, poormimed lake in Central Park. I was vulnerable, vulnerable enough to get sucked into the world of the iPhone 6.

Let me set the scene. I went away with 16 people. Of that 16 at least 75% of them had an iPhone. I heard about all about the cool emojis they had. I heard about the "Cloud". I saw the

top quality photos from the various pictures they had taken. When my phone thought it would be kind enough to function, the camera decided that it would be too much on the battery to open. And when it did so generously open, the photos it took were despairingly blurry. How am I supposed to preserve the memories of my trip if my flawless facials (ha, sorry can't even take that seriously) are blurred next to the token tourist American landmark?

On the other hand, the latest and greatest iPhone had it all. It now had a bigger screen. The pictures were stellar. You could even send an emoji of the poo you saw on the path. In this vulnerable state, my need for the iPhone grew. I wanted to fit in with all the others. I wanted to see the poo emoji instead of a square box. I wanted to instagram myself looking perceptively over the horizon of New York without the lights being blurry.

It was sealed. I was getting the iPhone 6 when I got home. I didn't feel vulnerable, I felt excited! This was my first iPhone after all and now I would be part of the cool kids crew. Then I saw the price tag: \$1149. What the actual fuck. Is that the price of being cool? The poo emojis aren't worth that. I could sponsor a child for over three years with that. Or more importantly, get my daily mochaccino for most of the year. Suddenly the glorious iPhone world shattered around me. My vulnerability was replaced by my wallet's vulnerability. Instead I went with a phone that was half the price. And to my great pleasure, it came with a poo emoji. Success



"AND TO MY GREAT PLEASURE, IT CAME WITH A POO EMOJI."



# What a load of Crac-News (whatever shit we could find)



EMAIL NEWS@CRACCU.CO.NZ WITH ANY FUNNY SHIT, SO I CAN BE EVEN MORE LAZY.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Florida:** Lydia Ko has completed Step 1 of becoming a golf legend by being the youngest world number one; she now has to complete Step 2 by cheating on her partner.

**Hollywood:** The director of *27 Dresses* has revealed the film was gonna be called '1 Dress' but the pre-viewers all saw different coloured dresses, so they had to change the name.

**Auckland:** New Zealand beat Australia in the cricket. Cricket is now temporarily New Zealand's official national sport.

**Indonesia:** Indonesian authorities have decided not to execute the drug smugglers from the Bali Nine due to Australian government pressure, instead giving the two men a "light tap" as punishment.

**The University:** Stuart McCutcheon Gets Salary Increase. Experts defended University of Auckland Vice Chancellor Stuart McCutcheon's recent salary increase to five times the Prime Minister's by saying that, "when people are choosing a university, they always look at the Vice Chancellor's salary as an estimation of how good the facilities are".

Send in your News In Brief suggestions and be in to win a FREE copy of *Prince Phillip's Arsehole - An Inside Story* by Tony Abbott RRP\$25.

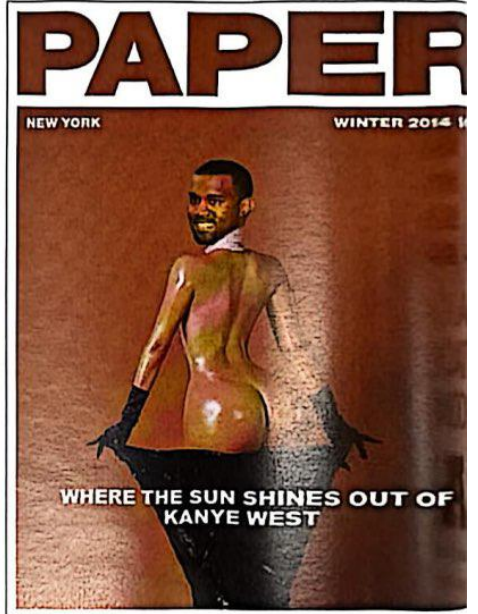


## KANYE WEST INTERRUPTS JESUS

**H**ISTORY HAS BEEN REWRITTEN IN KANYE West's music video for his new song "All Day". The clip shows Jesus delivering his 'Sermon on the Mount', when Kanye walks up and interrupts Jesus saying "T'mma let you finish, but Kanye West's orations are better than this". He then proceeds to kick Jesus over, and rap the next verse on the mount.

While most journalists thought Kanye was taking a jab at his own infamous ego in the new video, it turns out he was deadly serious. "I completely believe Kanye is better than Jesus", said Kanye after the video was released.

Scandal also erupted when a source close to West said Kanye actually proposed to Kanye, but Kim Kardashian, who was in the room at the time, thought he was speaking to her.



Their birth of their first child also was surrounded in controversy, when Kanye corrected a presenter, saying "her name's spelt 'North' pronounced 'Kanye-is-the-best'."

## LEO AND RIHANNA SCANDAL



**A**SOURCE CLOSE TO Leonardo DiCaprio has revealed that the only reason Leo dated Rihanna was because her dog's name is Oscar, and he wanted to have it.

Leo's agent denied the rumours saying, "actually Leo really doesn't care about getting an Oscar", has-

tening to add that Leo's new 7-storey gold person-shaped mansion was not a reference to the Oscar statuette.

Leo has yet to comment, but on the night of the Academy Awards he was seen through a window sitting alone in his house throwing food at his TV. Guess he must've been watching *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*.

Leo has also been criticised recently for being a player, but he refuted these claims on his Twitter, saying he only hangs out with the stunningly hot and sexy female models "because they have great personalities".

## NEW ZEALAND Woman's Shit



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**A**UCKLAND COUNCIL HAS IMPLEMENTED A NEW scheme to prevent non-students from getting the AT HOP card tertiary concession. Deviating from the traditional method of fines, councillors have come up with an innovative way of combating this major area of fraud. "We have deliberately made getting the concession as complicated as possible", a spokesperson told *Craccum*. "We tested it on a sample population and only those with an undergraduate degree or better could understand the system". The scheme has been criticised by some, who point out "some very intelligent high school students have been spotted using the concession". Auckland Council has recommended that students wishing to get the concession take "at least three courses" in Computer Science, two in Accounting and either FILLINGOUTFORMS101 or

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**P** RIME MINISTER JOHN KEY HAS CONFIRMED that New Zealand will be sending specialists to Iraq to aid in the struggle against militant group ISIS. The decision has drawn criticism from some quarters, with opposition parties refusing to back the government's proposal. In a press conference yesterday, Key was dismissive of the opposition's stance. "Yeah, at the end of the day, you have to be a bit of a sissy to disagree", the Prime Minister affirmed. "It's an exclusive club and you have to do your

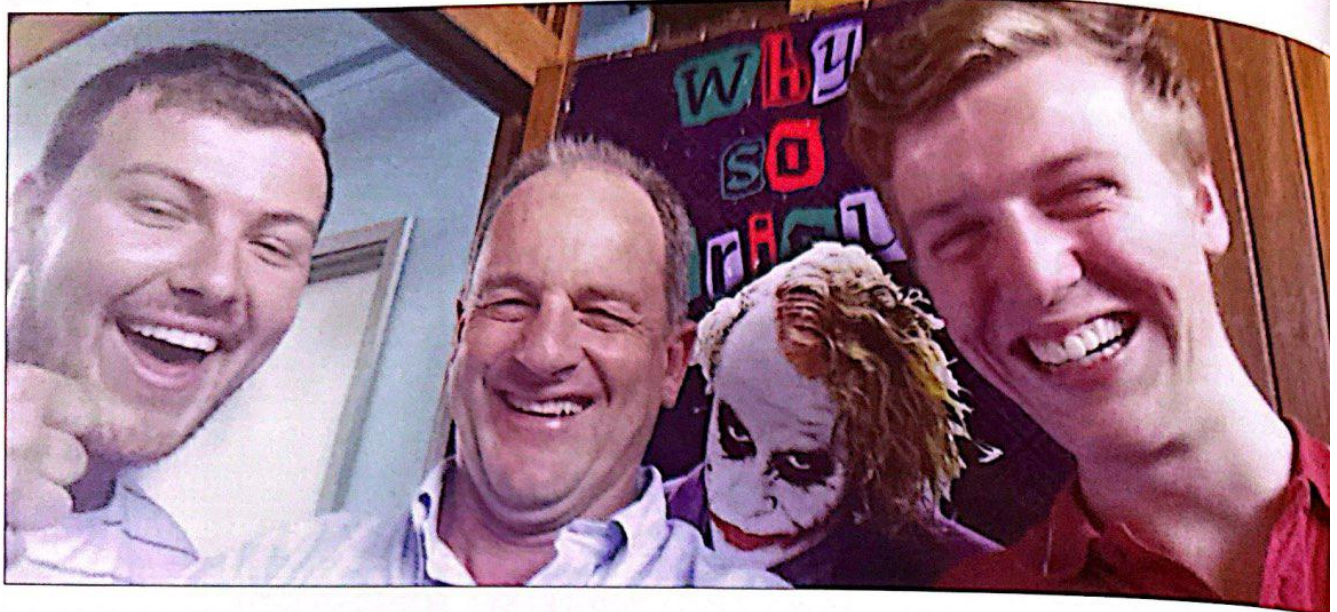


When pressed on the benefits of belonging to this 'club', Key chewed his lip for a moment before replying that buffet privileges at summits such as Davos were key concerns in mak-

**GUESS I'M SO DESPERATE I'M GONNA PUT  
THIS SHIT IN THE MAG.**

The ISIS threat has purportedly drawn closer to New Zealand's shores. Westfield shopping centres have reportedly been targeted by the group, which cited crass commercialisation, Western hedonism, and unreasonably short time periods to redeem gift vouchers as its reasons for calling jihad down upon the malls.





## INTERVIEW WITH DAVID SHEARER

**M** P FOR MOUNT ALBERT, DAVID SHEARER, is someone you may know if you followed the Labour party's leadership scrum. He was Labour leader for about a year, has an MBE and is currently Labour's spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Energy & Resources.

Here's the summary of his replies to my rather deep and thoughtful questions.

**COLOUR OF THE DRESS.** He had to be reminded of what it was, and then said he saw "an indigo blue and a lighter blue". Dafuq?

**X FACTOR.** He doesn't like it at all, because the contestants have the guts to go out and do it and then "get trashed by some sort of, you know, kinda has-been judge". Cough, Mel Blatt, cough, Willy Moon.

**50 SHADES OF GREY.** Hasn't watched it, doesn't intend to. "I find it so curious that everyone's so excited about it when 70% of the Internet is full of porn. Is it the story?"

**THE KARDASHIANS.** "Pretty dreadful". "They're famous for being famous, there's no basis for their fame other than being rich".

**EMBARRASSING MUSIC TASTE.** Taylor Swift. "I think she is fantastic". Favourite song on her new album 1989? *Style*. Yeah David, you care about T-swizzle's relationship with Hazza.

**BEST NIGHT OUT STORY FROM WHEN HE WENT TO AUCKLAND UNI.** He laughed. "We had a day which started off with a raft race across the harbour, which didn't get more than about 100 metres off the harbour before most of the rafts sunk because we were all carrying too many buckets of horse dung to throw [at other rafts]. And then we finished it off with a 37 stop pub crawl around Auckland, which was very messy...people were literally lying on the side

of the road as we got back to the university. Solute gold.

**DID YOU EVER CHILL WITH JOHN KEY A BEER, DISCUSS YOUR PARTIES, ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE? HAVE YOU THAT WITH OTHER LEADERS?** "Yeah

Winston Peters and I have had several together. John Key and I... we used to go to the gym [at the parliament] at the same time. We had a chat in the gym or whatever".

**WHO LIFTS THE MOST?** "Well... of course", he said laughing. "John Key worked with a couple of his security guys so I did some press-ups, a bit of boxing training, that sort of stuff. I tend to do cross-fit light."

So I can testify that David Shearer, sometimes maybe seems like a serious guy in a suit, but he's actually a pretty Laddish bloke. Still, that bloody white and gold!





***IT'S NOT***

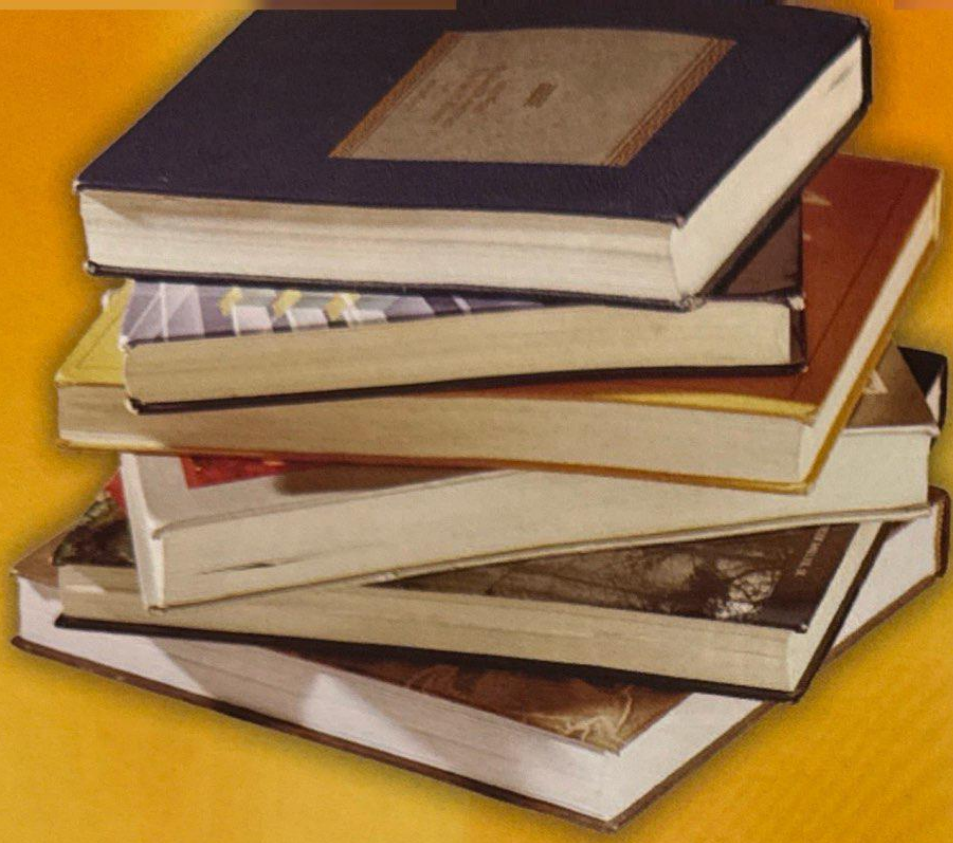
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## RESPECT

WITH CONNIE G

**T**HE PARTY WAS GOING ALONG NICELY. Everyone was dressed up. I was not. There was a Hercules, a Jesus, a drag queen and some Egyptians. I made innocent small talk with various people about topical issues such as the colour of The Dress. Oliver and Peter were playing beer pong. Andrew was on the couch talking to a girl. His hand was on her knee. I went into the kitchen to get another beer. I was glad that I had decided to go to the party.

But it wasn't long before shit hit the fan. A smallish, bearded and obviously incensed person wearing nothing but a flax skirt came charging in and backed me into a wall. I didn't know his name. I do now. It's Connor. He started yelling. He was shorter than me, so I looked down and saw little bits of saliva leaping out of his mouth.

"When you're in her fucking house you fucking show some respect you cunt!" he shouted. He gritted his teeth and breathed loudly out of his nose. He made a panting, raspy noise. I asked him what was wrong. "I don't fucking know who you are but if anyone disrespects her I don't give a fuck who they are I will fuck them up". All very well, but I had no idea what he was on about. I asked him to explain but he said that I

knew *exactly* what he meant. He said he was going to teach me a lesson. The lesson was about Respect.

"When someone invites you into their house you show respect cunt. You don't fucking smirk like a cunt you cunt! Because I fucking respect her, when you disrespect her, you're disrespecting me!" I told him that I agreed with him. I tried to appease him. I assured him of my respect. I denied that I was cunt. He didn't even listen. He just accused me of smirking like an arrogant cunt. He raised his fist and it hovered in the air. He made it vibrate, just to show how much destruction and self-righteousness was stored in it. And he kept breathing loudly out of his nose to show everyone how angry he was.

Fortunately someone intervened. I don't know who he was but he really knew what he was doing. I was grateful. He saved me a lot of trouble. He lowered his voice and his eyebrows and said, "Oi, bro, you know me and you know I literally respect the shit out of you way more than anyone else in this house bro. And I fucking respect what you're trying to do. I'm on your side bro".

Connor found this logic compelling. A deep conversation ensued. "I fucking respect you too bro," he said, flax skirt rustling as he turned around. "I know you, but I don't fucking know this cunt, and when she tells me that she's been disrespected in her own house..."

"Hard man, hard. But what I'm saying to you bro, like fucking literally as shit, is that the

disrespectful cunt is not this cunt. I'm not fucking questioning your integrity bro. I know you would never fucking lie because that's one of the things I love about you bro is your fucking integrity, so if you got an issue with someone here let's fucking hunt them down and I'll fucking back you up a hundred percent oi".

Touched by this tribute to his integrity, Connor started to calm down. He wasn't breathing as loudly

now. He didn't want to kill me anymore. In fact, he looked like he might be about to cry. I snuck outside to recover. I thought that was that. I was about to go back in. But then there was a commotion inside the house: shouts and bangs and loud swearing. There was some sort of drama going on. The friends I had turned up with were marched out the front door by a group of very serious and purse-lipped girls. We were told to leave and never come back. We were very confused.

As we were getting in a taxi, more girls came running up the road. They banged on the windows and pressed their faces up against the glass. It was like a scene from a zombie movie, one where the plot made no sense. One of the girls shrieked, "My uncle's in the Mongrel Mob, cunts!". And to think things had been going so well. The taxi driver looked frightened. We drove away laughing. All of my friends said they had no idea what happened. They all said they thought it was hilarious and made lots of funny jokes. The only one who didn't seem to find it funny was Andrew. He sat in the back with his chin resting on his hand, looking out the window, not saying very much at all. But that wasn't unusual. He's a pretty quiet person most of the time.

**"THERE WAS A  
HERCULES, A JESUS, A  
DRAG QUEEN AND SOME  
EGYPTIANS."**

**"I DENIED THAT I WAS  
CUNT."**

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## THE ADDICT AND THE IMMIGRANT DRINK AT HOME BECAUSE THEY'VE RUN OUT OF MONEY

BY AMINDHA FERNANDO, AND A FAT SMOKER

*The Addict falls out of bed, gropes for a smoke, nothing. Gropes for booze, nothing. Gropes for a girlfriend, nothing. Cries. The Immigrant wakes up early, has a jog, eats fibre. Looks into the mirror. Cries deeply. Our protagonists are too broke this week to bar hop. Cheers society. So tonight's special will be a five night drinking-at-home-a-thon...*

### Night the first: The Addict's Flat

A dirty, squalid, damp little hole. Very un-hobbitish. Very Judith Collins in her youth. This flat smells like must and old RTDs (which the Addict accidentally calls STDs in an unbecoming Freudian slip). A quick note on Auckland rentals: after being promised that the flat would be commercially cleaned, the Addict arrived to find rotten chocolate in the cupboards, ooze in the kitchen, and an actual honest-to-god crack pipe in the upstairs attic. After setting up a table outside, facing the crack pipe upwards as a makeshift ashtray, and stealing \$40 from some passing teenagers, we set out for the liquor shop.

Booze stores are a sad affair in our great isthmus. Either painfully pretentious and overpriced (Glengarry), or painfully ugly and sad (all other liquor shops). We went for the latter. After a quick succession of heart attacks wondering how the hell it is that bars dare sell items 10 times the price of your average alchymy shop, we started to compare price to standard drinks ratios. We settled on a fancy bottle of New Plymouth bourbon. We wondered why we were ruining a perfectly good Monday morning...

The bourbon tasted of lighter fluid and piss. What is bourbon? It's the sad, lonely, perverted uncle of the alcohol world. The retardedly petulant brother of whiskey. The disappointing child of corn-mash and regret. The Immigrant claims this week's issue is a tad sad. The Addict doesn't mind.

As we contemplated the direction we were going in for this review, we took another shot and realised that you probably won't care. Drinking at home has to be one of the greatest student pastimes. The Immigrant bought himself his first pack of durries. The Addict stole them. The Immigrant passed out. The night ended with Chinese food and a cheeky vom out the bathroom window, stomach contents landing on the neighbour's rose bush.

### Drinks 2: The Immigrant's.

It's really sad hosting a wastey night when your parents are in the same house. The night consisted largely of the Addict stealing bottles from the family liquor cabinet. To escape the parental judgement we headed up to the attic. As if drinking at home couldn't get any sadder we had copious shots, our hunched forms illuminated under the light of a single swinging lightbulb. The presence of the Immigrant's parents hovered at the forefront of our minds the entire night. We had yet another shot hoping that the guilt would dissipate. "Shhhhh!" said the Immigrant as the Addict lurched over to the window for his signature vom, "you'll get me in so much trouble". The Addict belched and lit a cigarette, and their second brawl of the year ensued.

Shit. Just fucking shit.

### Drinks 3: Cha's.

A mutual friend invited us over for poker. We had zero interest in showing up. The Addict was told we could smoke inside and beer was provided. Twelve minutes later we arrived. Poker starts. Poker nights can be fun, but only as an excuse for long hang outs with the lads. When you get five douche-bags who want to make actual money and start yelling at you for betting too slowly things get shit.

A piece of advice: only show up if you know who else is going to be there. Just because someone's your mate doesn't mean they know anyone else cool.

### Drinks 4: The Addict's next flat.

The Addict was thrown out of his last flat for vomiting out the window and waking up a family of five on a school night. The Addict moved flats. This time, Kingsland. This time, more expensive. This time, clean. The oppressive rental agreement and fear of losing yet another round of bond left us compelled to drink outside for the sake of protecting the white walls from yellow tobacco stains, red wine, and bodily fluids. The picnic table was cute. The mosquitoes not so

much. The flatmates bumming smokes even less so. The beer was cheap, and flowed continually. Things were fine.

11pm we ran out of liquor. We jumped in the Skyline (sketchy), revved the engine. The neighbours' lights flicked on, dogs started barking. We turned up the bass and screeched out of the street. We arrived at the liquor store - it was closed. We went to Glengarry - it was closed. We drove to the supermarket - it was open. But not selling alcohol.

Team. This is fucked. We realise there's a dangerous binge drinking culture in New Zealand. We realise that people get hurt when they drive drunk. We realise this column celebrates these problems with gleeful abandon - along with casual racism and a dubious attitude to mental health. But these liquor rules aren't helping. We still get drunk, we just buy stuff earlier. Puritanism won't stop us drinking, it'll just make us more belligerent.

We urinated in the supermarket parking lot in vengeance. The night was done.

### Drinks 5: The Office

At Uni. One of us has recently acquired an office: obviously a license to drink beer on campus. We're not technically allowed so we barred the door and pulled the curtains. Swearing our friends to secrecy, we took a whole lot of photos and uploaded them to Facebook, tagging the location.

Uni dies around 8pm, so we dragged the office couches out onto the balcony, looking out over the quad. The Addict blew smoke and flicked butts into the public bin provided. A security guard arrived. We said we were doing important AUSA work. The guard left. We remained on the couch, looking out, with BfM playing shitty music in the background. Things were well.

Drinking at Uni is fun. We encourage our readers to open a bottle and light up a durrie on campus. Have a vomit off the balcony. We recommend reclaiming those little balconies outside Cultural Space.

\*\*\*

Overall, these five nights were solid, and fairly cheap. You can smoke where you want, and never have to leave. But drinking at home has its pitfalls, you have to mix for yourself, food can be hard to find, and it all depends on the company. Worst of all, you have to clean up after yourself.





## THE PRICE OF MOUTHWATCH

WITH CHRIS

**I** DON'T LIKE TO BRAG, BUT I LIKE TO THINK I'M pretty good with my pronouns when it comes to talking to transgender people. Or, like, I would be, if I had any in my regular social group. I know my 'hims' from my 'hers'; I just don't know many of 'them'. Which is a problem, right? My whole 'sensitive liberal' schtick is based on having all of the objectively-right opinions and behaviours when it comes to social politics, and profusely apologising over even the most well-intentioned mistake, but it sort of falls apart when the only people hearing these opinions and accepting these apologies (on behalf of the great oppressed) are other liberal majority-members.

Or when there's even the slightest personal risk attached. I'll offer a stern reprimand to friends who drop a slur over coffee, only to choke down my adopted outrage and pretend

not to hear when an acquaintance who's both less close and a social superior does the same out in public. So basically what I'm saying is I refuse to be ashamed of my convictions, unless the people around me think they're uncool.

Constantly policing even one's own subconscious for traces of bigotry is a lot of effort to go to for an affectation. The reality is that the only enduring evidence of the Herculean efforts myself and my fellow armchair-social justice warriors put into the battle for equality will be my Facebook message logs and vaguely remembered conversations. Which is upsetting, because these issues do matter. New Zealand's doing better than a lot of the world on social issues, but we're still pretty bloody effective when it comes to crushing minorities and the marginalised with the sheer weight of tight-lipped kiwi masculinity and retrograde legislation.

I'm not in any sort of position to affect meaningful change (the Prime Minister used to skim all

of the columns in *Craccum* but doesn't like the branding this year) which leaves me, as a relatively-educated white middle-class person raised on a culture which insists he's at the centre of the universe and the forefront of the struggle for equality, feeling a bit impotent. I think part of it is just that being even a little left wing gives you something of a persecution complex. I'm not sure whether it's

because, according to the last election, left-wing people are technically a minority, or because the left does tend to include people who actually

have been persecuted in some way, but there's a general sense amongst people who didn't vote National that society has a secret agenda against them. Which, in places, is pretty valid.

Between our politics, our dietary choices, and the quality of my last tutorial assignment, it's

easy to wallow in one's own impotence. Which is why it feels so empowering to strike back against bigotry. Which becomes a problem when the only people you actually hear from already have been politically the same view

as you. We rail against the already converted who misspeak accidentally or out of an earnest corrected ignorance. Rather than go out and find bigots to impose ourselves upon, or charities to utilise our time and enthusiasm productively, my politically-conscious friends and I sit around over-policing each other or self-flagellating over accidentally conflating racism and Islamophobia.

I was talking to a friend about one of the ideas I wanted to put in this column, and he mentioned an interesting David Foster Wallace quote. It's not as smart as David Foster Wallace, so here is:

"There's a grosser irony about Politically Correct English. This is that PCE purports to be the dialect of progressive reform but is in fact - in its Orwellian substitution of the euphemisms of social equality for social equality itself - of vastly more help to conservatives and the US status quo than traditional SNOOT [Syntax Nudniks of Our Time] prescriptions ever were".

I've never met an oppressed person, but I'm quietly sure that if I ever did they'd immediately break down in tears over just how special and tolerant of their difference I was.

**"I'VE NEVER MET AN OPPRESSED PERSON, BUT I'M QUIETLY SURE THAT IF I EVER DID THEY'D IMMEDIATELY BREAK DOWN IN TEARS OVER JUST HOW SPECIAL AND TOLERANT OF THEIR DIFFERENCE I WAS."**

**"THERE'S A GROSSER IRONY ABOUT POLITICALLY CORRECT ENGLISH: THIS IS THAT PCE PURPORTS TO BE THE DIALECT OF PROGRESSIVE REFORM BUT IS IN FACT - IN ITS ORWELLIAN SUBSTITUTION OF THE EUPHEMISMS OF SOCIAL EQUALITY FOR SOCIAL EQUALITY ITSELF - OF VASTLY MORE HELP TO CONSERVATIVES AND THE US STATUS QUO THAN TRADITIONAL SNOOT [SYNTAX NUDNIKS OF OUR TIME] PRESCRIPTIONS EVER WERE".**

**- DAVID FOSTER WALLACE**





## INVIDIOUS: INTENDED TO OFFEND NOT A HAPPY GAY

BY NATHAN PERRY

**T**HE GAY "COMMUNITY" PRIDES ITSELF... ON quite what I am still oblivious, but the fact is there. The gay community prides itself. Every year a parade occurs. Every year homosexuals and non-homosexuals alike turn out in droves. Colours and floats, drag queens and politicians fill the streets and gay men, gay women and their heterosexual counterparts (not to mention everything in between) line the streets. Rainbows and loudness. Drag and pop music. I am a gay man. Moreover I am a proud gay man. But this parade is not made for me. Gay "culture" was born to protect men and women who happened to find members of the same sex attractive. It was a safe place for those members of society that had been marginalised and disenfranchised by the wider community. What happens may I ask to those of us who have nothing in common with what the gay "community" has decided is our culture?

The pride parade has a more than noble heritage. Following the repeal of the laws that forbade homosexuality and made it punishable by imprisonment and chemical castration the parades filled not only a necessary position but also an ethical one. Public opinion was still very much that gayness was an obscure fringe thing that made people less... well less. At this time it was important to stand up and be counted, to let people know that we were there and queer and weren't going to change. That tradition is nothing but noble. However there seems to be have been a change. It looks like gay culture has decided what it means to be gay. What's more I seem to have been left out of the big gay meeting where we decided this. Perhaps

the invitation got muddled up in the post, maybe they didn't paint the envelope brightly enough to draw the eye (the loss of invites may have been the reason gay culture moved so fervently toward pink and rainbows) at any rate I was left from the conversation. Now without my say so the community,

the only community I might add, that was meant to stand in solidarity with me and in defense of me has left me feeling more out of place in it than I had ever felt when I was out of it all together. The worst part is I'm not the only one.

The gay community, like all communities, is made up of individuals. These individuals all have their own prerogatives, beliefs and backgrounds. I will admit that catering to all of those individuals is an impossible task. But surely it's reasonable for a group of people with a history of freedom fighting, political activism, classical literature and ancient romanticism to get a little vituperative when reduced to a rainbow flag and a set of arselss chaps. I suppose at this point I ought to make it clear that I have no problem with arselss chaps nor indeed chaps that like to dress as women nor, for that matter, chaps without arselss who indulge in transvesticism. As far as I am concerned individuals can act exactly as they please so long as it harms no one else. The trouble

comes when a society or group, that claims to be the voice of a people, acts in a certain way. This group has decided what gay culture is and explicitly says that they stand for gay men and women. It may well stand for some gay men and for some gay women and those individuals are more than welcome to have their own club but don't tell me that you stand for me.

The problem may thus far seem small and if you said that homosexuals had to struggle against far more oppressive and grand issues I may well

agree with you. But the problem doesn't stop at a small minority within a minority getting slightly hacked off. It is not unfair to say that there is still a persistent prejudice in society that victimises gay people. Homosexuals are often stereotyped as loud and feign attention seekers. It seems that the biggest issue people

have with gayness is that it doesn't conform to social norms. Well I'm not going to defend such inane nonsense but I do feel like a point needs to be made here. When most people are raised to be humbled and reserved members of a community and taught to admonish the arrogant and self

important is it any wonder that a community that throws itself a parade and chooses all the colours as their own becomes is still bullied in this modern progressive age? So many times I have even myself (more often outed by friends who believe themselves to be doing me a kindness) only to find myself being ask if I know so and so and how

**"BUT SURELY IT'S  
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FLAG AND A SET OF  
ARSELSS CHAPS."**

I found the big gay out of the pride parade. It seems that even the most sensitive liberal has had their mind warped by current agenda. The feeling is, it seems to be, that by going to these parties and parties that they are supporting an oppressed minority. Not only is gayness conflated with drag, celebration and self importance nonsense by the ordinary run of the mill bigot but also the liberal (historically a friend of the homosexual). I admit the nuances of gay hatred, as well as thoughtless support, are too broad for me to talk about in this short column. I will say though that I believe "gay culture" and the "gay community" may feed it more than it does hinder it and I personally don't see that as a particu-

larly beneficial thing.

Being gay is hard at the best of times and at the flaccid at the worst. The hardships forced down our throats, if you'll pardon the pun, seem to me to be an unwelcome addition. Feeling sidelined and unwanted by both the community of your birth and the one established to protect you is more than a little heartfelt and considerably harmful. It piles on somewhat that every thing marketed as gay such as "Rue Paul's Drag Race" and the psdo song "Dress to Express" is so and less. It seems that gay culture is the least cultured of them all.

I said earlier that I was gay and proud. Both those things are true. They are both true and connected. I am so proud of the achievements made for gay rights. I am also so proud of the achievements made by the civil rights era. Not because (or at least I hope) they affect me but have made my life easier to live, which they certainly have, but because they are a truly great accomplishment for the human species. I see no reason to be proud of a sexuality and if you hear a heterosexual spouting about his pride in being straight you might agree with me. I am gay and want to stand in solidarity with every other disenfranchised citizen but so long as gay culture continues to be what it is I feel as though I cannot





## KANT OR WON'T? ETHICAL SKID MARKS

BY ADITYA VASUDEVAN AND CALLUM LO

**W**E LIKE TO THINK THAT RAPID DEVELOPMENTS in technology are taking us forward into the future, opening up new horizons. The reality, though, is that these creations continue to plunge us back into age-old moral dilemmas that have plagued theorists for centuries. Brake lightly, dear reader, as you approach this lonely zebra crossing amidst turbulent highways.

Google is amongst the technological superpowers currently in the process of perfecting the driverless car. In a world where all transport is run by artificial intelligence, we need to make difficult decisions about what we tell those cars to do in the face of ethical conundrums. Take the

situation where a car finds itself hurtling towards five school children and can only avoid them by crashing into a tree, killing the solitary passenger. How should we programme the car to respond in this situation?

If there were a vote on the issue, it's unlikely that any more than a handful of people would opt to kill the schoolchildren. The problem is, people would be just as unanimous in taking the exact opposite position in a seemingly identical situation. Consider this: five schoolchildren are in a hospital instead, all dying of organ failure. A man walks into the hospital to visit a loved one. A doctor in the hospital finds himself unable to decide on a simple question: would it be moral for him to kill the man against his will, forcibly rip out his organs and save the five children? Almost no-one would see such a course of action as reasonable.

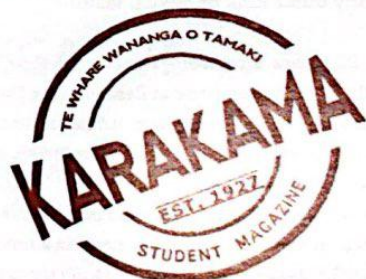
In both situations, either the children or the man must die. The man is also completely innocent in both scenarios. Despite this, our psychological responses are completely polar. This oddity likely boils down to the fact that, at heart, we aren't intuitively utilitarians. We don't naturally think in numbers, or make calculations when faced with moral challenges like these. We would look to

the fact that, in the car scenario, the man is in some way part of what is going to cause the children to die. But does that directness of causality deserve the importance we give to it? We are still dealing with five lives.

Should we let individuals program their own cars when it comes to these ethically difficult situations, or should the government program them all to save the children? Let's look at this in degrees. If a driver had to choose between his or her life and that of five children, we would generally allow him or her some impulse of self-preservation in the moment. So, then, is it ok for someone to programme the car, out of the moment, to save them first and think of others later? From a policy perspective they have no more of a claim to life than the children. I'm inclined to think that the government should program cars for the optimal social outcome, but this still doesn't change my view that the doctor shouldn't forcibly steal the man's organs.

I just can't escape those pesky psychologically impulses.

P.S. Is it strange that we write using the first person 'I'? Are we some kind of crazy conjoined super-personality?



## NTM PRESENTS TE ARAWA IWI FORGE THE WAY FORWARD

**2**007 MARKED ANOTHER YEAR OF MEDIA coverage that both highlighted Māori achievements, and threw us under public scrutiny. On one end of the spectrum, we had Corporal Willie Apiata of the SAS being awarded the Victoria Cross, and on the opposite end, we had the tragic abuse and death of 3-year old Nia Glassie at the fault of her own family. But in the same year, there was another less publicised news story that had my attention captured.

French fashion designer heavyweight, Jean Paul Gaultier plundered the sacred face markings of Māori, known as moko. This was done in order to promote his latest collection in an editorial for the fashion bible that is *Vogue* magazine. The message coming through from Gaultier was that Māori culture was exotic and beautiful. To some, this was regarded as flattery or cultural appreciation. But from the perspective of Māori, the adoption of our moko, an important element of our intellectual property for the purposes of fashion, was rather, cultural appropriation.

In pre-European Māori culture, moko were a social status indicator, received only by people of high rank. They were exceptionally inviolable and carried the spiritual restriction of 'tapu'. For Māori who respect the history and understand the significance of moko, it is not taken lightly, which is why the misappropriation of moko by non-Māori is seen as an insult.

Māori academics such as Aroha Mead believe

that the publication of moko in an international fashion magazine is a commentary on New Zealand, saying that; "it's more vogue to be Māori outside of New Zealand than it is inside New Zealand", and in reference to the idea of Māori culture as exotic and beautiful, she stated that "the tragedy for us is that we are not perceived that way in our own country."

7 years later in 2014, Māori culture was once again made fashionable in the Australian issue of *Marie Claire*. Published were images of the same Gaultier models wearing moko in a tribute piece for the designer himself. But this time, the magazine's Associate Editor, Anna Saunders, apologized for any offence that was caused in the wake of their publication. Offence

that may have stemmed from the Māori viewpoint that if moko identifies the wearer's whakapapa, or genealogy, and is notably sacred, then it cannot manifest a generic design that can be put on just anyone.

## IN PRE-EUROPEAN MĀORI CULTURE, MOKO WERE A SOCIAL STATUS INDICATOR, RECEIVED ONLY BY PEOPLE OF HIGH RANK.







# — THIS HOUSE WOULD NOT ATTEND CLASS —

## AFFIRMATIVE

BY ZACHARY CHAMBERS

**I**CAN'T RECALL A COURSE WHERE I HAVE ATTENDED every lecture and not regretted the experience. In fact, I would dare say I get increasing returns to utility, happiness effectively, as my lecture attendance diminishes. Why is this though? Why are lectures and classes in general just so unappealing that I can somehow become increasingly happier despite the effect such moves should have on my grades? The reality is lectures and classes are boring, useless and painful with better grades coming from napping and 'self-directed study'.

To those who are new, a mature student is someone who has returned or come to university following a significant time period since the end of their secondary school education. To you first years this may seem like nothing, "it's just old people right?" WRONG. Every time you attend a lecture you will likely have one of these students in your classes and as any of your >1<sup>st</sup> year students will tell you it is hell. They will dominate the lecture environment with multiple

questions that evolve into a back and fourth with your lecturer until you realise they've consumed like three minutes of your lecture time! If it's not wasting precious lecture time that means the lecturer now has to only use 52 minutes to superficially explain critical content, these mature students will ruin your experience in other ways. Just yesterday one in one of my lectures dared help a lecturer to get the automated slides in a lecture theatre! I

mean what kind of asshole seeks to enjoy and utilise the resources available to them as best as possible while stripping off arbitrary notions of squeamishness in large public settings because they've simply gotten over the obsession with

social image that grips younger students and want to help people?

**"IN FACT I WOULD DARE SAY I GET INCREASING RETURNS TO UTILITY, HAPPINESS EFFECTIVELY, AS MY LECTURE ATTENDANCE DIMINISHES."**

If that's not enough to convince you, consider the benefits of working at home. In lectures you have to go at set times and dates to advance your learning if you rely on "lecturers" and attendance. If you stay at home though, you can read your textbook in your own time. That means that you can have deep study sessions after you booze on the

town or after you realise your 30% essay was due yesterday. It also means that those fascist lecturers won't stifle your creativity telling you what's, "most important for the course" or "you have to write an essay on at least on section in the exam".

It's a simple fact then that outside lectures you don't have to deal with mature students and you can just 'feel' your way through your degree.



## NEGATIVE

BY CHRIS RYAN

**M**Y OPPOSITION WILL HAVE TOLD YOU some lies about how class is boring and pointless, but I am here to be a sane voice of reason.

With the cost of an average paper now reaching ~\$900, if we assume that you have a scheduled 3 lectures a week as well as a tutorial, every hour of class you miss costs you \$20 (or to use more relevant measurements of cost 5.7 Flat Whites, or 2.86 1L Shadows jugs). One of the few things that we can all agree on is that the Vice-Chancellor makes way too much money. Not going to class is literally like giving him free money that you have borrowed. At least make him work hard for his absurd salary.

**"ONE OF THE FEW THINGS THAT WE CAN ALL AGREE ON IS THAT THE VICE-CHANCELLOR MAKES WAY TOO MUCH MONEY."**

want to do in your future, so why miss learning about ideas that interest you? Other than this, you might get to chat to the person next to you and learn that you both hate people who still don't have an AT Hop card (sort your shit out friends, it slows the bus down), or, shockingly you might realise that your lecturer is actually a really cool person and has done really cool stuff

before becoming an academic. You never know, you might learn that your lecturer, like you, has a penchant for some Taylor Swift bangers (haters gonna hate).

Thanks to the magic of technology you might think that you can watch your lectures at home

rather than attending class. This is often true. However, let me warn you that lecture record-

ings are the ugly duckling to the sexy, seductive swan that is live class. Often lecturers will turn off the recording to provide some high quality banter or alternatively some very subtle test/exam/assignment hints. Furthermore, I, like you, am partial to some sneaky Tumblr in class, but at home Tumblr is almost always prioritised above actually paying attention to lecture recordings. More shockingly, some classes aren't recorded and with only the PowerPoint slides and readings you miss out on the banter of real, live class and the handy hints about exams/tests/assignments, especially as attendance dwindles mid-semester. Plus it just makes it harder, often the exam covers general concepts rather than specific lecture material, and it's just harder to get a holistic view of what the course is really about when you have missed classes! If you go to class, uni suddenly becomes easier, which means less time spent studying and more time having great times!

Finally, it's hard to make friends when sitting at home (your computer doesn't qualify as a friend). Rather, go to class, engage, talk to people, make friends, find your eternal soul mate or even get laid.

Class can often be a really fun time. Presumably, you are at uni to do something that you enjoy or



# Friends of JUSTICE

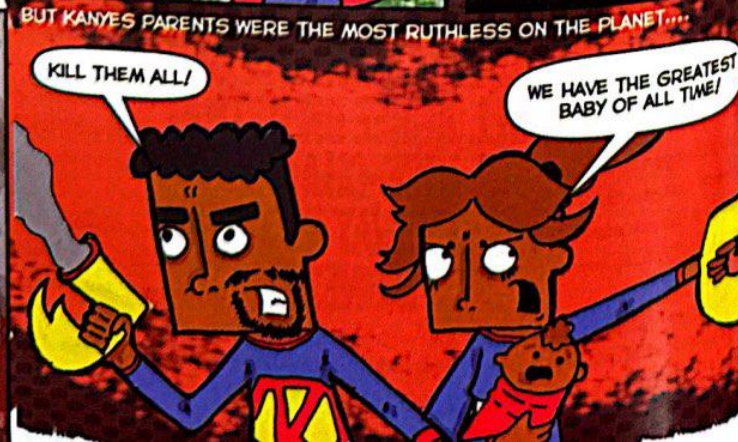
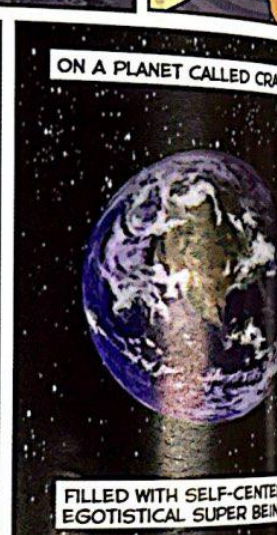
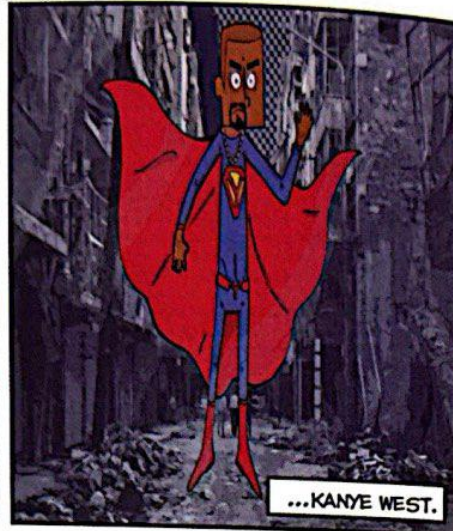
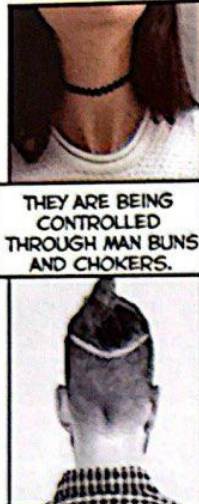
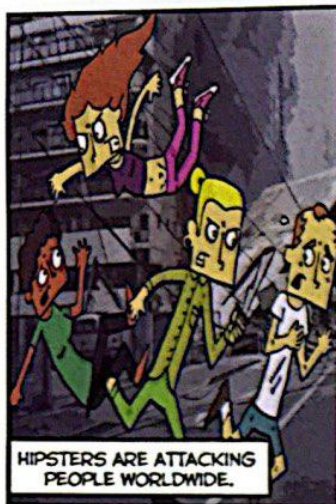
WRITTEN/DRAWN BY DANIEL VERNON  
FACEBOOK/FRIENDSOFJUSTICE

CAPTAIN ALCOHOLISM:  
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WHEN ALCOHOL  
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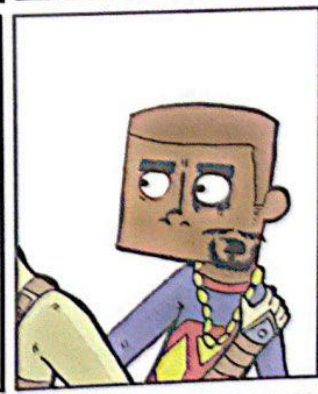
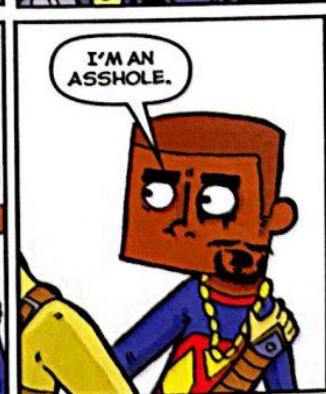
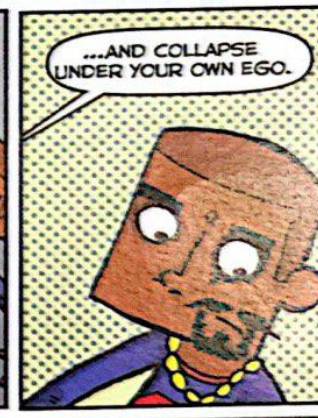
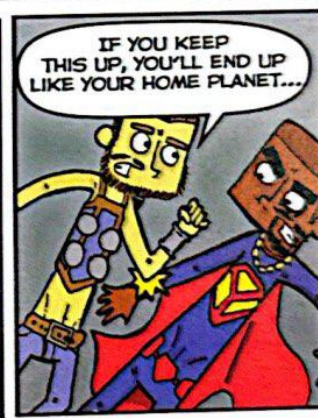
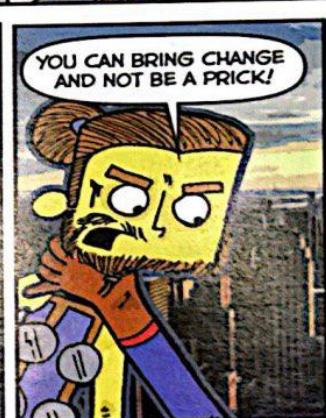
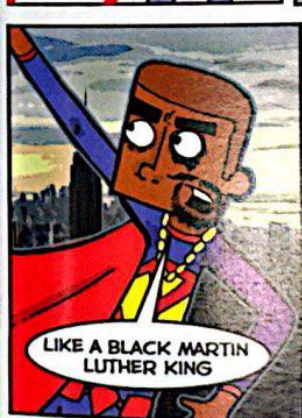
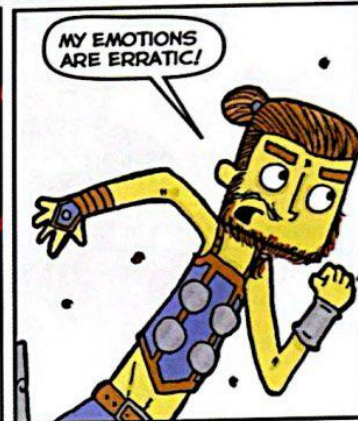
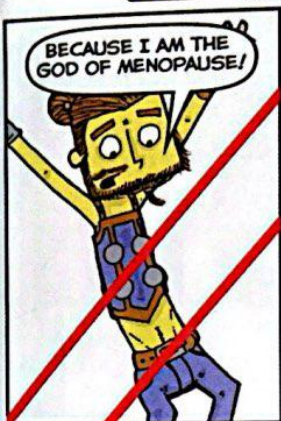
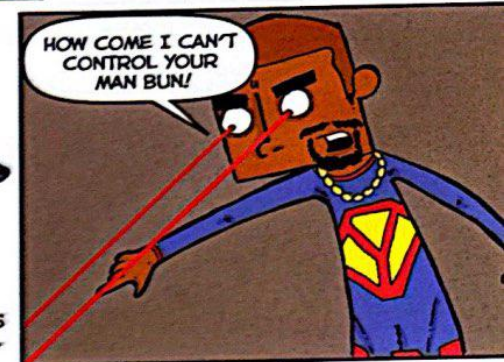
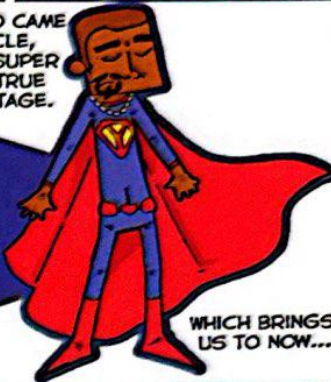
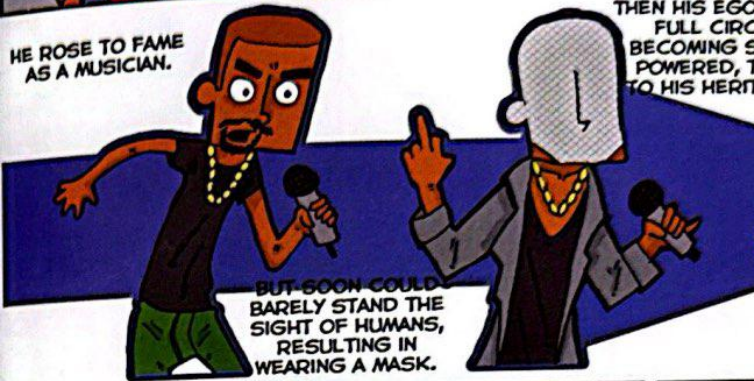
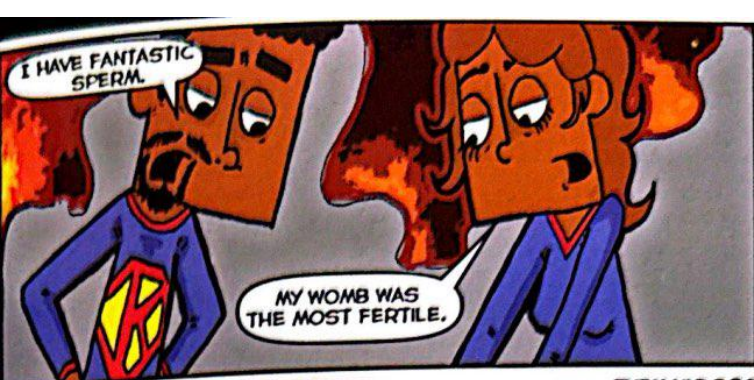
BLACK POWERS:  
CAN TELEPORT  
THROUGH THE  
COLOR BLACK.

ACHILLIESHEEL!  
GREEK GOD  
OF MENOPAUSE.

HOME RUN:  
BEATS PEOPLE  
WITH A BAT.  
THE HUMAN  
META







AND SO HE DID...



**NEXT WEEK:**  
**WHEN YOUNG**  
**NATS ATTACK!**







# POLITICS AND THE MEDIA: “I HAVE A THEORY THAT THE TRUTH IS NEVER TOLD DURING THE NINE-TO-FIVE HOURS”

BY CURWEN ARES ROLINSON

**F**OR MOST PEOPLE OUR AGE, POLITICAL journalism is just another unwatched segment on the nightly news. For a slightly smaller demographic (chiefly those party hacks you've probably seen around O-week, who fortunately come colour-coded for your convenience/easy avoidance), it's the bread-and-butter of current events coverage. Comparing its function to the sports section shows the way we use it to keep track of how our 'teams' are doing, as the passion of the politico for his chosen sport and club easily rivals the devotion and psychic investment of your average ball-game fan; possibly because we get to think of ourselves as active players on the field (however minor), rather than mere passive spectators on the couch.

A select few of us, however, don't just watch the news. We feature on it from time to time.

The first thing you notice once you pass via the camera lens, through that ineffable Fourth Wall en route to your transitory quarter-hour of glory, is that the relationship between what's portrayed through the media and the actual course of events is frequently less arms-length than arm-wrestle. Whilst it's true that any exercise in reporting – particularly when it comes to a subject as vicissitudinal and vitriolic as politics – is going to be prone to editorial slant or even allegations of deliberate malfeasance, recent developments in the field leave an inescapable feeling that stories dripping in subjectivity, sensationalism, and an often outright slovenly commitment to factual accuracy are now the trademark rather than the exception.

The obvious example from the last Parliamentary term was the litany of attempted Coups-By-Media the Parliamentary Press Gallery tried

against then Labour Leader David Shearer.

You'd think, given the favourite pastime of Labour parties the world over appears to be Leader-Rolling, that the media would have been content to just sit back and let nature take its course; but no, like the nature documentary-maker who insists on wounding a gazelle so the lions have something to play with on camera, our theoretically 'neutral' political reporters often seem to have this irrational obsession with making the news rather than merely reporting on it. How else to explain Duncan Garner breathlessly claiming that a Letter of No Confidence against David Shearer was being circulated through Labour, outright stating that Patrick Gower was going to present said letter on that evening's Nightline broadcast, and then coming up completely empty-handed when neither of these things occurred.

**“A SELECT FEW OF US,  
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TIME TO TIME.”**

More recently, I watched with frank amazement as several mainstream media outlets reported on Aaron Gilmore (you may know who he is) winning an uncontested election to his local National Party electorate committee as the first public step in New Zealand's best known part-time list MP's grandiloquent and quite possibly vainglorious plan to secure a 2017 comeback to Parliament. It didn't seem to matter that Gilmore had clearly denied this was his intent, or that the likelihood

of his re-entering Parliament at the next election was somewhere lower than the odds of Peter Dunn acquiring a second MP and a Youth Wing. To the political correspondents penning the stuff, the pageantry and titillation to be had (whether for their audiences or themselves) in dredging up one of the most schadenfreude-inducing political sagas of recent memory in order to present us with a near-universally reviled revenant-villain to jeer at, was obviously a much more important concern than any pretense of accurate reporting. How else to explain this incredibly outlandish situation of a swathe of otherwise nominally serious journalists stooping to cover the story of a local man taking on a relatively insignificant role within his local party organisation. I literally cannot recall any other instances of an individual joining an electorate committee generating nationwide media attention at any point in our political history. The only semi-plausible rationalisation I can offer is that one of Gilmore's more influential detractors in National still despises him enough to bother expending influence with the media to call in a bombardment of embarrassing press every time he pokes his head above the parapet, with a view to hounding him out of the party or something.

Interestingly, since the first running of the Gilmore stories on February 17, strategic edits have been made to remove the string of quotes from an unnamed National Party insider, which were the only real source for the 2017 Parliamentary Comeback part of the story in the first place. That kind of post-facto alteration is customarily the result of either threats of legal action from somebody close to the story, or direct Malcolm Tucker style intervention (i.e. threats or cajoling, often delivered at high volume and accentuated by a profusion of profanity) by a party's Press Secretary. See what I mean about the-truth-as-you-read-in-the-newspapers being more of a



mutually agreeable meta-reality than an actual record of facts?

For a minor and yet somehow more insipid instance of press interference in reality, try this. Back in 2010 (while New Zealand First was still out of Parliament and fighting desperately for media oxygen to fuel a comeback), Winston managed to create a media opportunity for himself by telling the press he was about to use his Gold Card for the first time. Dutifully, the reporters turned up to grab a sound bite and a photo for a human-interest story on Winston the Senior Citizen catching the ferry back from Waiheke. I was standing on the wharf with him as TV3's Kim Cho conducted an 'interview' that basically consisted of Cho asking him somewhere up to a half-dozen times whether he was intending to run for Auckland's Super-Mayorality later that year. Winston responded in the negative, and with ever-increasing ire. By the time Cho actually started asking about his Gold Card, the metaphorical veins in his forehead were bulging, and smoke was billowing from his nostrils (which is pretty impressive considering he hadn't even lit a cigarette).

It occurred to me then that what I was witnessing was less an interview than an elegant act of sabotage. The reporter in question had absolutely no interest in letting Winston get a nice easy bit of positive coverage out of his ferry-trip, and had instead decided that if she absolutely *had* to be party to a camera being aimed at him, then she'd do her best to make sure it was an angry, embittered and vindictive Winston that appeared on that evening's 6pm news rather than the gregarious and relatable image he was attempting to project. The continual and irrelevant stream of repetitive and stupid questions she'd deployed before finally making a cosmetic effort at getting the Gold Card quotes she was supposedly there for was evidently a cunning ploy to rile him up and allow her to portray him as she wanted: in the least favourable terms possible.

These three examples ought to demonstrate the way our journalists frequently and cynically manipulate the flow of political reporting in service of personal agendas. Making up a story, à la Garner on Shearer, can help to shape the course of events so as to render the political landscape more in keeping with a commentator's preferences. It also tends to lead to exclusive scoops on interesting 'stories'. Honing in on material that might not otherwise make it into the media, like last month's Third Coming of Aaron Gilmore journalist-jamboree, affords pressmen the authorial rush of being able to exert the narrative power of creating villains and victims. It also allows them to trade in influence with the powerful by performing political hits or providing positive public press as favours. As evinced by the conduct and outcome of Kim Cho's exercise in political bullfighting with Winston, they're quite

crafty when it comes to injecting personal biases if not outright vindictiveness into their coverage. Even the theoretically what-you-see-is-what-you-get medium of a video recording isn't immune to distortion.

## **"DUTIFULLY, THE REPORTERS TURNED UP TO GRAB A SOUND BITE AND A PHOTO FOR A HUMAN-INTEREST STORY ON WINSTON THE SENIOR CITIZEN CATCHING THE FERRY BACK FROM WAIHEKE."**

Now, to be fair, reporters are only human and, like university students, are often at the mercy of tight deadlines, not insignificant blood-alcohol content, and the travails of trying to make frequently boring if not downright arcane information seem vaguely interesting.

It's therefore entirely unfair to suggest that every instance of dodgy political reporting by the media is exclusively due to malfeasance on their behalf. Some of it comes down to journalists being wilfully blind or, on occasion, obliviously co-opted as the pawns and bishops of grand and sweeping political conspiracies.

That, incidentally, is the other explanation occasionally advanced for Duncan Garner's Chicken-Coup tweet about the impending overthrow of David Shearer. Instead of the Parliamentary Press Gallery attempting to manufacture a coup against Shearer (so as to give themselves something vaguely interesting to report on concerning the MP, whose tenure leading Labour appears doomed to go down in popular memory as both red herring and fish in a barrel), some Labour MP may have fed Garner the story of an imminent ouster so as to destabilise Shearer's leadership and spur an *actual* caucus-room coup as a result.

There's certainly something both insidious and insipid about a lone media pundit (possibly working with a single disaffected MP) being able to create a story out of thin air like this, then witnessing the outcome they prophesied actually transpire a little under a month and a half later, thanks at least partially to their ef-

forts. Yet this pales in significance and gravity of consequence when compared to a far more perniciously pervasive exercise in mass-media manipulation that's been going on right here in New Zealand for much of the Twenty First Century.

I'm talking about the National Party's skilful use of WhaleOil as revealed in #DirtyPolitics.

Despite the way it's been spun, this isn't simply a case of a few Nat high-ups staying up late writing one of the country's best-known bloggers. If it were, there'd be very little to get outraged about. That's just how the game is played. Politicians have always cultivated close relationships with pressmen to further their agendas; while this century has brought new sophistication to this seduction, the only serious questions remain – as they were a hundred years ago – to what extent to which the media is willing or able to be co-opted, and how far politicians are willing to go by betraying their colleagues, or even breaking the law to keep their pet journo's fed.

But where this usually just entails politicians repetitiously meeting with pressmen in bars or coffee shops to quietly slip them manila envelopes of leaked material (or, in Peter Dunne's case, going for the 'hide in plain sight' approach by covertly flicking Andrea Vance material about our intelligence services while overstating out her Twitter like an enthusiastic newly armed with a smartphone), #DirtyPolitics turned out to be something more akin to a horrifying combination of Perez Hilton and the Watergate break-in.

If you're a politico, then you're probably at least vaguely familiar with many of the ins and outs of National's cyclopean (or perhaps myopic) covert communications edifice as revealed in Nicky Hager's Dirty Politics book. If not, a short synopsis entails that ever since National got into government nearly seven years ago, they've creatively (mis)used the resources of state to furnish a hugely successful partisan blogger who somehow turned himself into an unimpeachable mainstream media fixture, with otherwise privileged information designed to attack, discredit or smear political opponents. Thanks to the way political journalism now works in this country, National is able to play our media like a fiddle.

One of the most egregious examples of the whole conspiratorial contrivance in action comes from the 2011 Election. Earlier in the year, then-Labour Leader Phil Goff stated that the SIS had not briefed him on Israeli espionage activities taking place in Christchurch. This turned into an attack on Goff's credibility by John Key when a copy of the SIS briefing previously given to Goff turned up on WhaleOil. At the time, Goff's claim that this indicated a



state's domestic intelligence agency must have been in active collusion with the National Party to facilitate their re-election campaign seemed the stuff of conspiracy theory. However, we now know that John Key's office deliberately set out to discredit Goff by selecting, declassifying, and even editing for effect, previously classified SIS material for political gain. This was passed to WhaleOil for publication by indicating precisely which documents to request via the Official Information Act in order to construct the story, while fast-tracking his OIA so that a process of disclosure, which would ordinarily take at least a month for any other citizen, was somehow completed inside 24 hours. As a point of interest, sensitive material was apparently disclosed before he'd even OIA'd for it. As soon as WhaleOil had blogged about it, other more conventional media outlets were able to pick up and run with the story, to Goff and Labour's ongoing and escalating detriment.

Phrased another way, National pretty much directed our state intelligence apparatus to help publicly discredit the leader of the Opposition during an election year, and bent the rules well beyond breaking-point in order to disseminate compromising and otherwise classified information out into the media and public sphere (and therefore influence voters) through its premier online mouthpiece. All while being able to maintain a pretense of clean hands by concealing the extent and instrumentality of Beehive collaboration with WhaleOil, even as his blog was being actively used to steer and weaponise an incredibly large swathe of the New Zealand media by effective remote-control.

More recent strikes have made use of said blogger's cultivation of a fairly broad-ranging network of stooges, sycophants and servile supporters scattered throughout this country's news media and blogosphere (including a pulsating if not pustulating preponderance of pavonine papyrocrats phalansterised over at the *New Zealand Herald*). Apart from the obvious utility a surreptitious 'voice at the table' brings in terms of being able to covertly advance one's interests by influencing reporting and editorial decisions at some of the country's largest media outlets, these operatives have also been deployed as an alternative 'clean hands' vector for some of WhaleOil's attacks in a manner not entirely dissimilar to how National itself uses Whaleoil.

The best example of this from #DirtyPolitics was the use of Rachel Glucina's gossip column in the *New Zealand Herald* to publish information alleged to have once again been sourced from our spy agencies, which suggested Winston Peters had met with Kim DotCom three times in the run-up to the 2014 election. By using the *Herald* to disseminate this (and specifically through a gossip column rather than the politics section), WhaleOil not only managed to add credibility

to the attack, but ensured it would be read by a far broader swathe of the electorate than just his own, admittedly expansive, blog-following. He used Glucina's column to support baseless and demonstrably false accusations that New Zealand First's political independence was compromised due to Winston negotiating some sort of deal with Dotcom to get him to fund our election campaign. (I genuinely didn't think it was possible to confuse Winston with Hone...)

When you look at all of this together, it isn't hard to see why WhaleOil represents something both fundamentally revolutionary and revolting in our politics. There's nothing particularly new about politicians maintaining tame journalists, or even abusing their position and powers in order to discredit opponents. With PRAVDA firmly in mind, there's even established precedence (if geographically and politically remote) for using partisan and party-affiliated media outlets to try and dominate a nation's political press and public sphere. The guys behind THAT one also made a habit of using their state's domestic intelligence agency to help the government of the day take care of political opponents.

## **"THERE'S NOTHING PARTICULARLY NEW ABOUT POLITICIANS MAINTAINING TAME JOURNALISTS, OR EVEN ABUSING THEIR POSITION AND POWERS IN ORDER TO DISCREDIT OPPONENTS."**

Now in the (former) USSR, a trilateral confluence of Party, State Apparatus, and proudly Partisan Press would represent business as usual, and an expected status quo perfectly in line with the way their political culture has organised itself for decades. The only raised eyebrows about National's conduct from our Soviet strawman's perspective would be at the comparatively non-lethal results of political neutralisation; our quaint national preference for the obligatory show-trial to be carried out in the Court of Public Opinion rather than in front of an actual member of the judiciary, and the curious observation that we haven't had to overtly abjure democracy in order to turn our political pro-

cess into one resembling a virtual one-party state. Actually, I take part of that last statement back. The inclusion of the Maori Party in National's coalition means there's at least one and a quarter parties in our present government. Despite our rampant alcoholism, massive over-reliance on an expensive liquid to prop up our export sector, privatisation-produced private fortunes (think Alan Gibbs), and our glorious history as a command economy, we are not a post-Soviet autocracy. Even though our government plays politics in a manner quite literally within only semi-spurious-analogy range of a stereotypical Eastern European dystopia, they remain broadly popular.

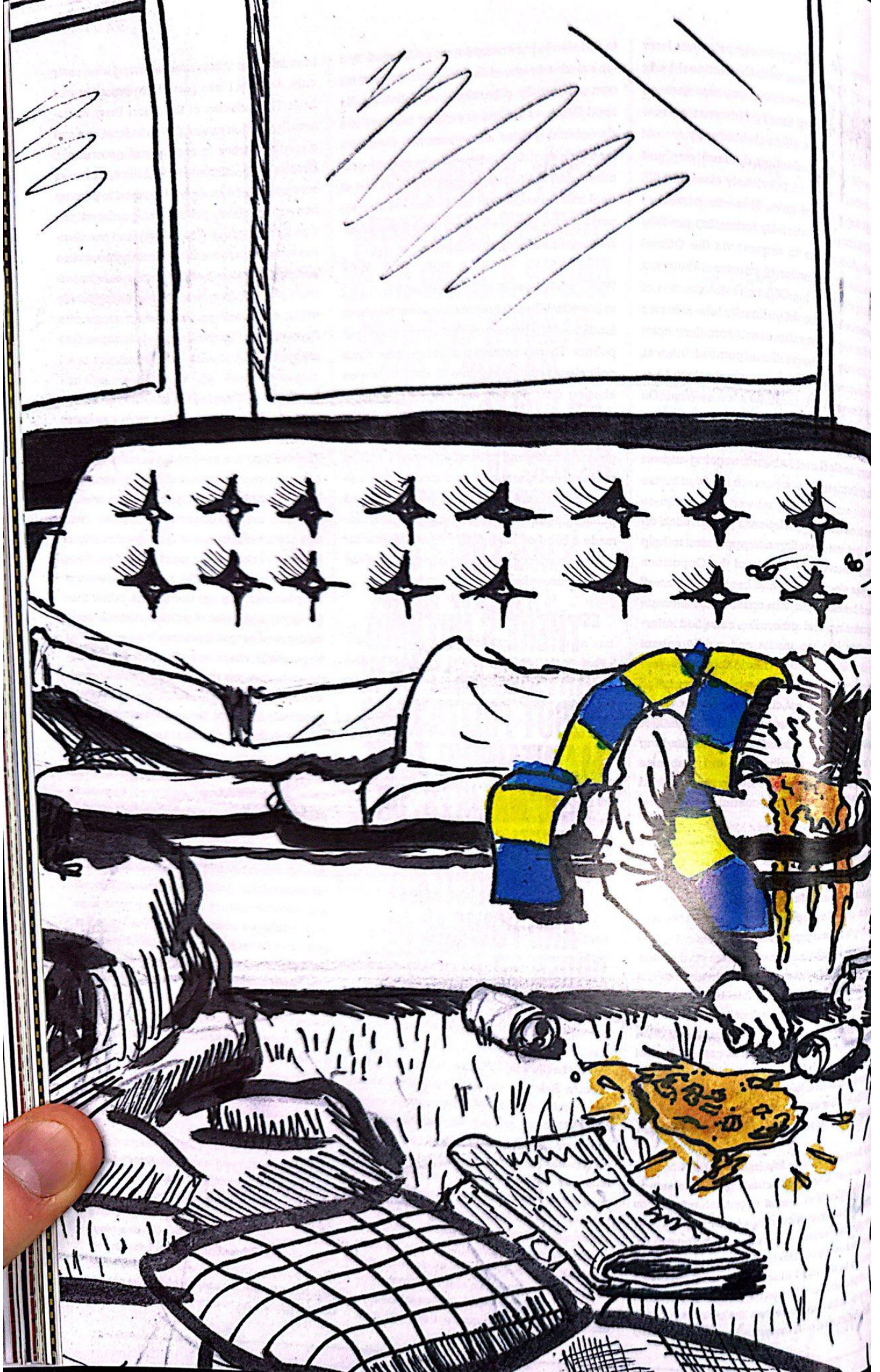
The fact that #DirtyPolitics failed to change the government despite dropping more revelatory bombshells than an entire flight of B-52s Rolling Thunder over Vietnam isn't the result of National corruptly stealing an election. It's because the Right is simply the best game in town when it comes to political communication. They know that complex barrages of facts (particularly in book form) don't really reach, much less sway, anyone who isn't a boffin, hack, or bureaucrat. They learned long ago that the gut, rather than the brain, is the seat of political decision-making for most people. Therefore, instead of trying to persuade voters with detailed, rational arguments, they just go straight for simple statements and emotive appeals. This is summed up beautifully in one of Cameron Slater's cardinal rules of politics: 'Explaining Is Losing'.

Even though we've spent the best part of a decade being constantly confronted with and/or confounded by the demonstrable efficacy of such an approach, many left-wingers still struggle with, or outright reject, this concept. It doesn't matter whether it's because many Lefties seem to hold a loftier view of the intelligence and attention-span of the average voter than their right-wing counterparts or, as I've often suspected, because long and detailed explanations play into an unfortunate need to show off how clever we think we are (looking at you, author of this TL;DR article!). If we're serious about fostering democratic engagement – or even, heaven forbid, winning elections – then it's a lesson we need to learn.

I'm personally looking forward to Craccum's 2015 political coverage helping to fulfill both aims.

Curwen Ares Rolinson was once, thanks to the Prime Minister, memorably investigated by the counter-terrorism branch of the New Zealand Police's Special Investigations Group as a potential "Threat to National[s] Security". He also blogs regularly over at Martyn "Bomber" Bradbury's *The Daily Blog*, and heads up NZ First Youth. He might therefore be just a teensy bit biased when it comes to politics and the media.







# SOMETHING IN THE WATER: STRANGE TALES FROM THE LITTLE CITY OF EXCESS

BY MARK FULLERTON

*Jordo mate:*

*Maybe the reason UoA has no culture is because people like you sit behind your shitty little desks complaining that no one invites you to parties. Get a grip. Our student culture isn't going to get better with miserable wankers (like you) shitting on whatever culture we have left, and Craccum isn't going to get any better with power-hungry fascist bastards (like you) in charge, running 3000 word opinion pieces as cover stories. Pull your head out, mate.*

*You ended up telling the kiddies that the best thing to do is to go down to Dunedin. What the fuck do you know about Dunedin? Unlike you, Jordo, I am a man of action. Not content to lock myself in an office and blast the masses with conjecture and speculation, I armed myself with a notebook and a pen and got on the first flight South.*

*Thought you might like to have a read, Maybe you'll learn a few things.*

**T**HE FIRST THING YOU NOTICE IN DUNEDIN is the water. It tastes different. A sharp, metallic taste, as if something isn't quite right with the pipes. Although, the first time I tasted it I was too thirsty to give a shit. I had been sitting on the side of the road for half an hour, waiting to be let into the flat where I was meant to be staying, not entirely sure whether or

not I was outside the right house to begin with. A sympathetic neighbour finally let me in – “My name’s Harry, but you can call me Spliff” – and I was given my first taste of student life at Otago University. The broken bottles, tattered couches and the young man passed out on the floor were an appetiser for the three days of drunkenness and atavistic endeavour that were to follow.

It was always going to be an odd trip. I had arranged to stay at a flat with a mate from school, but for one reason or another, that mate wasn’t actually going to be there. I found this out about six hours before I was due to leave. I had met two of Nick’s flatmates once (he had six), but when I arrived Freddie was out and Mike, having been kicked out of the cricket three times, had been missing for almost five hours. Regardless, the remaining lads – Blake, Taylor, Franny, and Connor – were nothing but welcoming.

Later that night a group of Aucklanders came around for drinks. The contrast was striking. The iPhone 6 next to the three or four Alcatel lying phones on the floor – “Mike and his fucking spare phones”, was the explanation offered – and the full black outfits, looking as though they’d just come out of Tyler Street Garage, compared to the fashion of the locals. When I asked about acceptable Dunedin attire I was told “just look as fucked as you can”. But we were not there to talk clothes. A beer pong table was fashioned



from the door of the hall cupboard, drinks were consumed, and we headed out into the surprisingly warm Dunedin night.

Dunedin is, geographically, a very different city to Auckland. It's flat, compact, and virtually everything is walkable. Earlier, with no other means of transport, I had to walk from the Octagon to the flat. Blake was astounded that I had travelled that far on foot.

"You walked the whole way?!"

"Yeah... it only took fifteen minutes"

"That's fucking ages!"

The distance was roughly the same as that from Kate Edger to Grafton Campus. Walking any longer than five minutes just isn't a reality for those in Dunedin.

That night we were on our way to 'The Backpackers', known to the rest of the country as the flat from the Godfrey Hirst ad, where the carpet company decided to install 'student-proof' carpet. As it happens, the beige carpet from the ad is no longer there, removed in favour of a dark blue. Still nice though. I copped a few odd glances as I knelt down to have a feel.

Backpackers was huge. A flat of around twenty people, the place has a reputation as a notorious party location. It seemed as though half the city was there. It was unlike any 'house party' I had been to in my life. The night ended at 12.30 with the arrival of noise control, backed up by police. As drunken students stumbled out onto the streets and dispersed in various directions, it was home time.

The next morning I caught up with a friend who had agreed to give me a walking tour of the city. I was shown Clyde Street, Hyde Street, Leith Street, the 'party streets', all of which looked like war zones. It was as we walked along these broken streets that Kat explained to me the concept of 'name flats'. There was The Boat House, The Libra Flat (#ourpad), Hyde Yo' Kids and various others. It's an honour to take over a name flat on a party street, despite paying higher rent "to live in a dungeon". Flat naming is a big thing; a blog, 'Flat Names of Dunedin' has been set up to chronicle the history and transformation of the name flats, with the eventual aim of producing a book. Despite the prestige, the flats (from the outside at least) looked like dumps. Away from the party streets though, many identify by where they live. 'The

**"I WAS SHOWN CLYDE STREET, HYDE STREET, LEITH STREET, THE 'PARTY STREETS', ALL OF WHICH LOOKED LIKE WAR ZONES"**

Ski Lodge' is enough of an answer to "where are you living this year?". If anyone were to respond with 'The Offal Pit' or 'The Sparrows Nest' to that same question in Auckland, you'd be left scratching your head. Flat names count down there, and along with that comes a sense of identity and community. Recognition of the name comes from the flat having a certain reputation, and being associated with that reputation carries a fair amount of cultural capital.

The tour also included a look around the campus. It's probably fair to say that their campus is in every way superior to ours. Granted, it was built earlier and many of the original

buildings, while not necessarily for student use, are enclosed in leafy green surroundings. It's just a nice place to be.

Point of comparison. The Otago Dental School was built around the same time as our dear HSB. From the outside, they are virtually identical, each as disgusting as the other. Dull monoliths of steel and glass. However, Otago has made an effort to make the inside look nice. Carpeted floors, lots of interior windows, functioning equipment; it seems where UoA has been perfectly happy to let us endure an eight-floor coffin, Otago actually WANTS their students to enjoy the places in which they study. Quelle horreur! A stimulating learning environment!

Sort your shit out, Stuart. We know you've got the cash.

Later, I accompanied the occupants of the 'Octopussy' (a flat of eight girls) as they went furniture shopping. It was there that I noticed the extent to which local businesses support students. The second hand shop from which they bought most of their items offered free door-to-door delivery - "it just saves you having to hire a trailer, y'know?" - and the owner was more than happy to drastically cut prices as part of package deals.

(Oddest find - a bag of second hand spices.

Like, cinnamon and mixed herbs in old Green boxes. I know students don't have the best taste (that desperate).

The woman at the counter had a newspaper with an article about a recent fire at 'The Boning Room'. An entire front room was burnt down and the young man, uninsured, had lost everything, only two days after moving in. She was asking if we knew how to contact the guy, as they wanted to donate furniture.

"Some dickheads always ruin it for everyone" she was saying. "No more couches are being burnt than normal, just more are being reported so everyone is getting all worked up about it. Leave the students be, I say. They'll sort themselves out".

This is true. For all the shit they get in the papers the students aren't the twisted devil-spawn that the *New Zealand Herald* and Dunedin City Council would have you believe. After all, these are the people who may one day be cutting you open to save your life. There's a significant degree of responsibility. After the Dunedin Council refused to clean up Hyde Street following a party, the flat who had hosted spent \$200 on a trailer and a whole day taking broken glass out to the dump - "It was our party, so we didn't mind". Of course, this was a minor sub-plot to yet another tale of debauchery and destruction

so the national papers didn't take it up. We hear about the recklessness of the Otago party scene but never about those who make amends in the sober sunshine. Hours after the Boning Room fire a Give-A-Little page had been set up - by students

The third night was an opportunity to explore the raging nightlife of Clyde Street. As I walked towards my destination there would have been maybe three or four flats that weren't having a party. There was nothing on a massive scale, each party consisted of a group of friends outside on a couch with drinks, watch

ing the proceedings, with lights and music and chat coming from the flat behind them. It was good fun, but once again the night was halted by the appearance of noise control and the (apparently) usual contingent of boys in blue. Much like at Backpackers the police were sympathetic, and this time for good reason. It was

**"AWAY FROM THE PARTY STREETS THOUGH, MANY IDENTIFY BY WHERE THEY LIVE. 'THE SKI LODGE' IS ENOUGH OF AN ANSWER TO 'WHERE ARE YOU LIVING THIS YEAR?'"**



small gathering of six or seven people, and the music had been off for almost twenty minutes before they made their appearance. But it was the second complaint in 72 hours, so the speakers had to be seized. Enter the most foul of the pre-pro yo-pro.

The student lawyer.

"I know my rights! My dad is a lawyer!"  
"Shorry mate but I shtudy law, you can't do thish"

"This is absolute bullshit, you have no legal documents or anything!"

Clearly, Dunedin is not immune. They are everywhere.

A girl approached the two policemen, clearly distressed.

"This is so not fair, I have my 21" next weekend! What am I going to do?"

The policeman gave a smile – "Have a champagne breakfast!"

The occupants of the flat were more levelheaded, but still disappointed.

"I just don't get it. Like, you live on Clyde and it's O-Week. You're not going to get a good sleep. If you want quiet, go live in North East Valley or Maori Hill, not on fucking Clyde".

I asked whether or not the police presence was ever necessary.

"Maybe, but I don't think so. Even in Dunners you'd have to be pretty fucked to attack a noise control guy. But still, it's pretty shit. It was never like this. Now fucking everything has gone. They just want to make Dunners like the rest of the country".

This was not the first time I had heard this sentiment echoed on my trip. Could it be true? Otago University, the last bastion of student culture, is it losing its touch?

The past few years have seen the closing of several student bars. The Gardies, The Bowler and Captain Cook have all closed their doors for good over the last three years. The first two were purchased by the University and turned into study areas. Not very scarfie.

According to Kat, the proctor was coming down hard on drinking related issues. The University employs not only a security force (Campus Watch, apparently famous for rescuing a wayward trencher from a stream) but also a full time policeman. Their power extends beyond

the walls of the campus; one girl, after her third visit to hospital due to drunken injuries, was told that if it happened again they would inform the University. In an early edition of *Critic* (their *Craccum*), columnist Laura Munro stated that, "One female student has also been referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor to 'review her stay at university' after repeat offending". The University is entrenched in the life of the city, the governing force of over 20% of the population. And it may well have the power to wring every last drop of excitement out of the Otago University experience, as Auckland has successfully done.

## "LATER, I ACCOMPANIED THE OCCUPANTS OF THE 'OCTOPUSSY' (A FLAT OF EIGHT GIRLS) AS THEY WENT FURNITURE SHOPPING."

This would be a cultural tragedy, because there is simply no other place like it in New Zealand. Wellington is fun and has a great student culture, but that's coming from an Auckland. Compared to nothing, anything is good. Dunners is in a league of its own. I was there for O-Week, which is actually something of a big deal. OUSA posters lined the streets advertising the line up of student events – several concerts, comedians and a live filming of *7 Days*. Like Auckland, these events are mainly attended by innocent first years, but, unlike Auckland, the older students are excited for O-Week regardless. Every night there were at least three parties I was (by-proxy) invited to, none of which were further than a ten-minute walk away. The group of Aucklanders from the first night had spent 19 hours driving from Auckland to Christchurch in one day, just to make it on time. O-Week is an event, whether or not OUSA has anything to do with it. It even has its own section on Wikipedia.

I think back to the night at Backpackers – could there ever be an Auckland equivalent? An open invitation party thrown by students, for students?

Definitely not.

It would require a combination of tolerant neigh-

bours and an inner-city location (an unlikely scenario in its own right), which would be out of walking distance for the vast majority. Auckland lacks the 'student areas' that make the Dunedin party scene so accessible. Name one student street in Auckland, I dare you. Inner city rent is so high that those students who need to live out of home are forced to the suburbs, miles away from uni and a significant taxi fare away from each other. Dunedin has no such problem. Those I talked to told me that lectures at Otago are much the same as at Auckland, where no one wants to talk to each other and the one-seat-gap rule is strictly adhered to. Friends are made by being neighbours, and sharing afternoon beers on the roof. In Auckland, we are the victims of our own sprawling metropolis.

Despite the best efforts of the proctor, I think it will be a long time before Dunedin becomes a South Island Auckland, mainly due to the attitudes of those who matter most – the students. They go there to have a good time. People can change in Dunedin, says Blake. Someone who was once a "sack of shit" spends two years in Dunedin and becomes "a massive sack of shit". Robert Sarkie's film, along with thousands of past students, have set the standard for a New Zealand student capital. And it'll be a hot day in Dunners before the students let that go.

My three days were up. My adventure was over. It was time to go home. As I made my way to the bus terminal I had one last look around.

Everything was beautiful, and no one was sober.

One final thought – my second night summed up Dunners pretty well. The boys invited me to a few casual drinks up the road. It was all very chill, a bit of Fat Freddy's, a few rounds of volleyball, a lazy game of beer pong. I was in bed by 11.

The next morning, Mike woke up with a lip piercing.

How?

Why?

No idea. These things happen.

Dunners is just that sort of place.

PS: My mum read your article, she really enjoyed it.







# THE PERSECUTION GAME

BY SEBASTIAN HARTLEY

**O**N JANUARY 7TH 2014, NIGERIAN President Goodluck Jonathan signed into law a statute aimed to 'sanitise' Nigeria of homosexuality. In a country where homosexual sex acts were already punishable by fourteen years imprisonment or, for those subject to regional Sharia courts, death, the new laws made participating in a 'gay organisation' a felony, and criminalised the offering of services such as HIV-AIDS treatment to homosexuals.

The law drew condemnation from the international community, including the United Kingdom and New Zealand. We joined in with the United Nations in disavowing not only the breach of fundamental human rights to bodily integrity and autonomy, but also the compromising of civil and social rights in a manner wholly incompatible with Nigeria's commitment to abide by international human rights law. The United Kingdom threatened to withdraw all aid funding from Nigeria unless immediate progress was made on ensuring LGBTQIA rights.

Curiously however, not even a year before so strongly condemning Nigeria's laws, Downing Street had refused to grant a posthumous pardon to Alan Turing, whose contributions

to Allied victory in the Second World War have recently been portrayed in *The Imitation Game*, to set aside his conviction for gross indecency under the United Kingdom's Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 (which was repealed by the Sexual Offences Act 1967 in England and Wales). It is generally believed that the devastation of his reputation as a result of his 1952 conviction, and the effects of

being subjected to chemical castration, led Turing to commit suicide in 1954.

Despite a petition with thirty thousand signatures, in 2013 the United Kingdom's Justice Minister rejected the request for Turing to be pardoned, on the basis that Turing "was properly convicted of what at the time was a criminal offence". Whilst accepting that the offence was "cruel and absurd", he said that it was the government's policy to "ensure instead that we never again return to those times", as it is not possible to "alter the historical context and to put right what cannot be put right". Following further pressure, however, the government relented, and the Queen pardoned Turing in 2013.

Certainly, we cannot change the past. Arguably, if it was true that such convictions were truly 'historic' events, then it would indeed be appropriate to claim that the persecution of homosexuals must be viewed as a tragedy of our society's inferior understanding at that time; something to be ashamed of, just as we ought to be ashamed of our society's historic persecution of individuals on the grounds of race, sex, creed, and so forth.

However, of forty-nine thousand men prosecuted for either giving physical expression

**"...THE COMPROMISING OF CIVIL AND SOCIAL RIGHTS IN A MANNER WHOLLY INCOMPATIBLE WITH NIGERIA'S COMMITMENT TO ABIDE BY INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW."**



to love or for satisfying their sexual desires, in exactly the same manner that heterosexual couples were able to without being labelled as 'criminal', fifteen thousand are still alive.

When a person is convicted of a criminal offence, they are labelled as aberrant, told that they have done something morally wrong, deserving of punishment. There are multiple perspectives on why it is necessary to do so, but the prevailing mentality, both in the United Kingdom and New Zealand, is that doing so deters the offender from committing the same offence again and discourages others from causing the same or similar harms to others, thereby protecting society. When the act criminalised is one that is the result of a conscious decision with a clear harm to others – such as murder or rape – it is not difficult to accept that a criminal sanction is necessary.

However, sexual orientation is, on most accounts, either something that an individual is born with, or something which forms in response to developmental influences; in either case, something which is not the result of a conscious thought process. Since having sex in line with one's sexual orientation is something that all individuals, except asexuals, have an inherent biological urge to do, criminalising a person for doing so because their genetics or developmental environment resulted in them being attracted to members of the same sex is to say that they ought to be labelled as aberrant, and punished for doing something that is not their fault. Doing so is logically equivalent to suggesting that those who are born with blue eyes should be put to death at birth.

Such a proposition is utterly irreconcilable with the pluralistic character of our democratic society, in which all groups should, regardless of their relative power, be equally able to live their lives in accordance with their preferences, so long as their doing so does not lessen the ability of other groups to do the same.

Therefore, so long as there are fifteen thousand men living in the United Kingdom whose only 'crime' was being a homosexual, and who have been labelled as aberrant for having engaged in sexual conduct in line with a preference not of their own choosing, the injustice being perpetrated is not an historic

one, but a present one. As in New Zealand, whilst those convicted of homosexuality do not need to declare the conviction, they have suffered the trauma of being told that their identity is morally wrong by society. Tacitly confirming that they were blameless by allowing

them to not disclose their conviction is not the same as the official statement of vindication that a full pardon would offer. So long as there is no pardon, they are still being persecuted.

The Ministry of Justice here in New Zealand is unable to speculate as to how many people were convicted of homosexuality related offences before the Homosexual

Law Reform Act 1986 decriminalised homosexual conduct, and it is therefore impossible to know how many people still live with the stigma of criminality unjustly imposed on them. However, the Ministry does know that some 879 individuals were convicted of sodomy, indecency, or "keeping a place of resort for homosexual acts" between 1980 and August 8<sup>th</sup> 1986; the day of legalisation. Many of these individuals must still be alive; still subject to convictions just as illogical and unjust as those of the fifteen thousand men in the United Kingdom.

There is progress being made. Following the success of *The Imitation Game*, Benedict Cumberbatch and a number of other leading British cultural figures and intellectuals signed an open letter calling for the convictions to be expunged. The letter was highly influential in motivating over half a million people to sign a petition, presented by Alan Turing's family on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, calling for all those convicted under the 1953 Act to be pardoned. In New Zealand, the incumbent Justice Minister, Amy Adams, signalled her willingness to consider doing the same for those convicted before 1986 here when she assumed office in October last year, but the government is yet to make any

moves to do so.

The principle, however, has already been conceded with the pardoning of Alan Turing. Unless it was the intention of the Government to signal that homosexuality was not really an offence in 1953, but if the individual in question was a war hero then it is unjust for Alan Turing alone to have been pardoned. All other forty nine thousand men convicted of exactly the same crime must also be pardoned, as their 'crime' is no different from his. Furthermore, in other countries, the fact that those who have been so convicted are allowed to not disclose their conviction reflects the tacit admission that they did no wrong; an admission that should now be made explicitly.

Admittedly, it is always dangerous to present judgments to judge past actions. It is true that Turing, along with the tens of thousands of others made criminals for homosexuality in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and elsewhere, were properly convicted of criminal offences as the law then stood. It is indeed therefore logically incorrect to pardon someone for an offence simply because we have subsequently become more enlightened.

Granting pardons to those convicted of homosexuality that since died will do nothing to help them. Even if, however, it costs us nothing, except a little moral coherence, to rectify an injustice to ensure that this chapter of a shameful history of persecution is one in which we demonstrate our willingness to learn from our mistakes.

Doing so will not change the past. But it may help us, the living, both by removing the stigma from the unjustly convicted, perhaps more importantly, allowing us to stand in favour of the rights of those facing greater persecution in Nigeria and elsewhere without being open to charges of hypocrisy.

**"THIS IS NOT ONLY A QUESTION OF LGBTQIA RIGHTS, BUT HUMAN RIGHTS, AND WE ARE COMPLICIT IN THE PERSECUTION OF HOMOSEXUALS EVERYWHERE IF WE ALLOW IT TO SILENTLY CONTINUE HERE."**

This is not only a question of LGBTQIA rights, but human rights, and we are complicit in the persecution of homosexuals everywhere if we allow it to silently continue here.





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# AUSA

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## CONGRATULATIONS! YOUR INCOME ROSE BY 90C!

FROM AUSA

**T**HE FRESH GLOW OF O-WEEK IS ALWAYS NICE while it lasts – the campus feels alive, there are untried new (and hopefully cheap) food options on offer, and you can almost believe it when you tell yourself that this year you'll keep up with the readings. But probably by now that glow has worn off. Second week is over. You've fallen behind in the required readings, let alone the recommended ones. Your first real assignment feels much closer than that relaxing afternoon you spent on a beanbag in Albert Park during Orientation.

And what's worse – your holiday savings are rapidly dwindling, rent's up from last year, and the bills are squeezing you tighter than ever. Despite what the New Zealand Herald would like to think, being a student isn't easy – and it is especially difficult if you happen to study in Auckland. MBIE Housing Data shows that average student rent in Auckland for a room in a three-bedroom flat is up to \$218.16 in 2014, an increase from \$209.90 in 2013. Last month TradeMe revealed a 9 per cent hike in average New Zealand rents for the year to January.

But the Government tells us they have good news – benefit levels have been increased "to

ensure that those people who rely on state assistance aren't disadvantaged by inflation". The outcome? Your student allowance (if you happen to be in the one third of students eligible) rose from \$174.21 to \$175.10. If you are surviving off student loan living costs, the maximum you can borrow to live rose from \$175.96 to \$176.86. Congratulations! Bet that'll take the load off!

Once again, the maximum accommodation benefit, for which the poorest 40% of full-time students on student allowances qualify, remains stagnant this year. In 2002, the accommodation benefit for students in Auckland hit the cap of \$40, and it hasn't moved since. Students in Auckland with no other means of support are now supposed to pay their average rent of \$218.16 with \$40. To add insult to injury, accommodation support for every other low-income New Zealand at least keeps pace with inflation. If an average student in Auckland was living on a non-student benefit, they would be entitled to an additional \$125 a week to support their accommodation costs, not \$40.

It's pretty clear the student support system is broken. The cost of rent alone makes up more than what a student receives from their allowance. If you borrow to live there's a \$40 a week gap to even pay the rent. And the extra 90c a week is a joke rather than a way to alleviate the problem.

It wasn't always this way. When the student allowance and loan scheme was established twenty years ago, accommodations costs for students in a place like Auckland made up only half their weekly income. Those lucky students twenty years ago had income left over for luxuries like food and transport.

The impact of a lack of support is consistently reflected by surveys and statistics. Two years

ago the Graduate Longitudinal Study, commissioned by Universities New Zealand, showed that one in six final year students were living in significant financial distress – meaning they did not have enough money for basic accommodation, clothing and food requirements. The recent NZUSA Income and Expenditure Survey, which surveyed full time students of all ages rather than just those graduating, found that 44% of students were in significant financial distress, without enough income to meet their basic needs.

It's time the government and opposition parties take student living costs seriously. Otherwise we risk locking those who need it most out of tertiary education forever.

### STUDENT ALLOWANCE



# \$0.89

PER WEEK

FROM \$174.21 TO \$175.10

### STUDENT LOAN LIVING COST



# \$0.90

PER WEEK

FROM \$175.96 TO \$176.86

### STUDENT ACCOMODATION BENEFIT



# \$0.00

PER WEEK

CAPPED AT \$40 SINCE 2002

16 February 2015

Notice is hereby given for the

# AUSA AUTUMN GENERAL MEETING

to be held

## WEDNESDAY, 25 MARCH 2015

at 1.00 pm

## STUDENT UNION QUAD

Deadline for constitutional changes is 12pm, Tuesday, 10 March 2015.

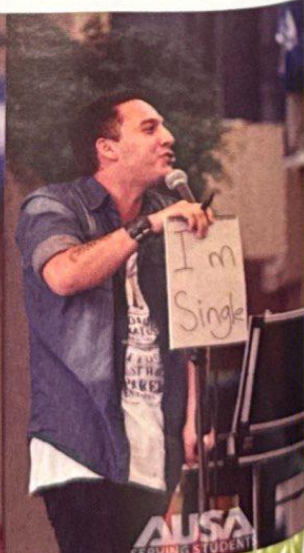
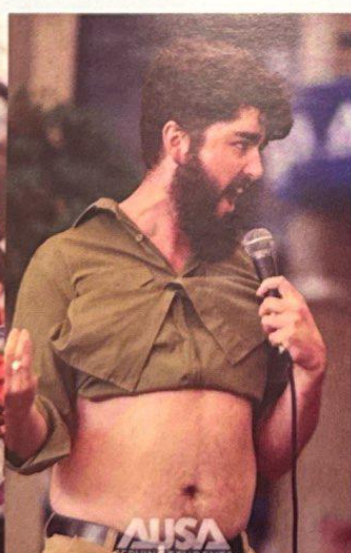
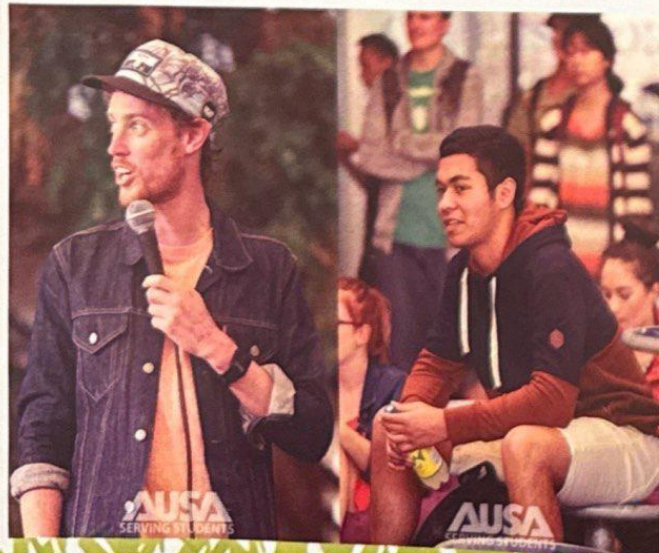
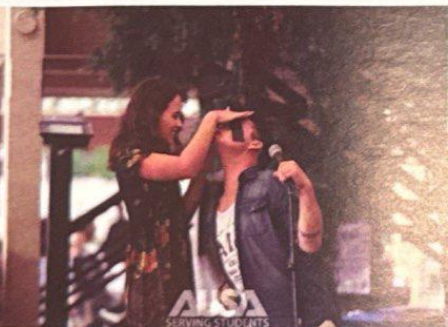
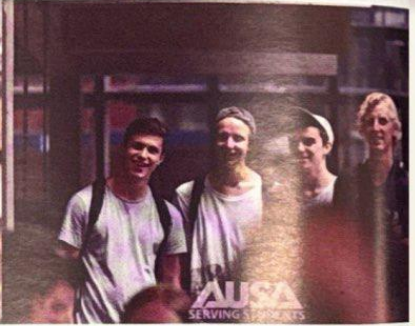
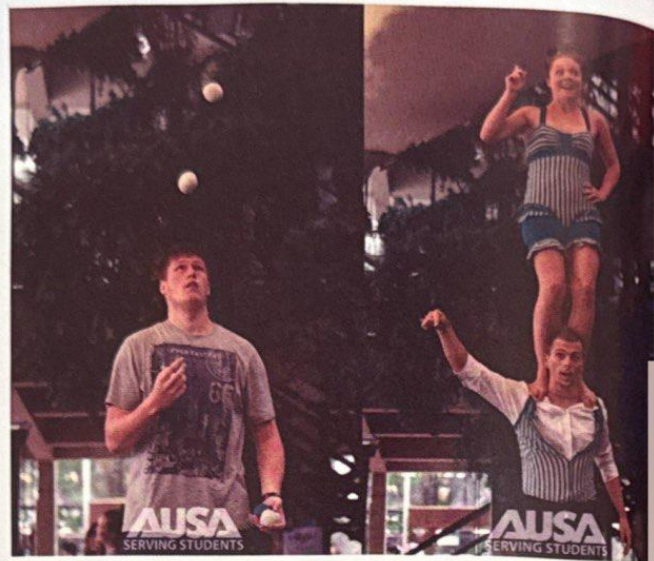
Deadline for other agenda items is 12pm, Tuesday, 17 March 2015.

# AUSA

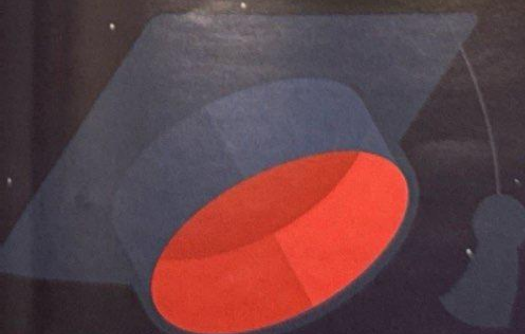
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# COMEDY IN THE PARK QUAD







# WHEN I GRADUATE... ORIENTATION STEIN



# BIKRAM YOGA OR HOW TO LOSE YOUR DIGNITY IN 90 MINUTES

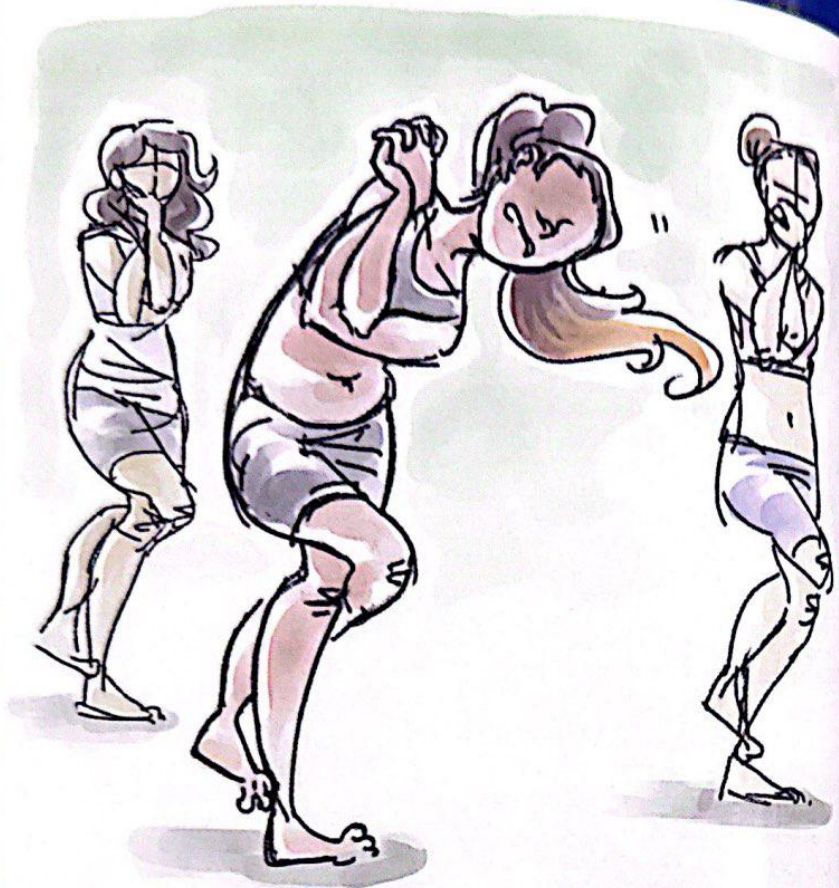
BY CARLA BONIOLO

**S**WEAT POURS DOWN THE ARCH OF MY BACK. I twist into concave shapes, spiralling my limbs around my body to create tantric silhouettes. Breathing heavily, I let my eyes roll back and inhale the sweet aroma of mutual perspiration that circulates the room.

No, unfortunately this isn't a sensual fantasy. This is 5pm on a Friday night in suburban Albany. I've willingly trapped myself in an incubator-style room (ironically positioned in between a Pizza Hut and a Burger Fuel) with at least 30 other sweaty sardines. I am a consenting adult and I have agreed to trial Bikram Yoga. Spoiler alert: it is every bit as uncomfortable and nauseating as it sounds.

The first main obstacle I had to navigate when embarking on this journey of alternative exercise was figuring out what to wear. I settled on my usual gym attire of tight shorts and singlet, yet found upon arrival that I was significantly over-dressed. I was one of very few who had their torso covered. Whilst in a normal setting this would seem repulsive, when you're about to spend 90 minutes in a room heated to 40 degrees celsius the lack of clothing appears totally rational. Entering the room before the class actually began was a rookie mistake. Earnestly, I thought I would find myself a spot to set up my yoga mat and make small talk with my fellow yogis. Three minutes in and I was starting to get really, really hot. This place was like a sauna on steroids.

After what seemed like an entire decade sitting



cross-legged inside a slow cooker (new found respect for those burned at the stake), the class finally commenced. Although I consider myself a relatively competent yoga doer, I struggled my way through this class. It is surprisingly difficult to sustain a confident tree pose whilst enduring waterfalls of sweat cascading down your legs from pores you had no idea even existed. My head also started to hurt about half-way through. I was overcome with that salty, dry headache you get when you wake up ridiculously early after a night of drinking and minimal hydration. At points I felt overwhelmingly nauseous and when the class ended all I could

do was lie there on my back totally defeated.

Driving home after this torturous event, all I was hungover. No endorphins, no spiritual enlightenment – just pure dehydration. It was the worst kind of hangover too, as I hadn't even nibbled wondrous cocktails or enjoyed myself in the process. I was flat, tired and sweaty. Some after-class googling informed me that I burned around 900 calories in that session, which equates to about half of my daily food intake. I all honesty, I think simply skipping a meal would have left me feeling a whole lot better than my Bikram yoga episode. Bikram yoga: I. Carla O.

## CHICKPEA CURRY (SUITABLE FOR VEGANS AND VEGETARIANS)

BY NIDHA KHAN

**T**IRIED OF EATING SCRAMBLED EGGS FOR breakfast, lunch, and dinner? Your turn to cook for the flat? Running out of money? Don't stress out! We're hooking you up with a student friendly recipe that is simple, cheap, and nutritious. It can even be stored in a freezer for another time. All you have to do is pick up the ingredients from the nearest Pakistani, Middle Eastern, or Indian store and get cooking!

Serves: 4

### INGREDIENTS:

- ½ kg uncooked chickpeas
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp red mustard seeds
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp red chilli powder
- ½ tsp cumin powder
- 2 medium sized onions, finely diced
- 1 regular can of chopped tomatoes
- 5 tps vegetable oil

### METHOD:

1. Soak the chickpeas overnight in water with a half tsp of baking soda.
2. In the morning, boil the chickpeas in a medium sized pot on medium heat until tender.
3. In another pan, fry the onions in the vegetable oil.
4. When the onions are lightly browned, gen-

tly mix in the spices, mustard seeds, and salt.

5. After adding in the spices, pour in the tomatoes.
6. When the oil separates, then blend the onions, spices, and tomatoes to a smooth paste (using any kind of blender).
7. Mix the paste with the chickpeas and let simmer together for 5 minutes.
8. Serve the curry with rice, bread, or just itself!

### NOTES:

- Raw chickpeas are cheaper than canned chickpeas, however, if you aren't able to soak them overnight then canned chickpeas are also a great option.
- Spices and chickpeas will be cheapest at Pakistani, Middle Eastern, or Indian stores compared to supermarkets.



# WHAT I REALLY DON'T LIKE

BY AUGUSTA CONNOR

**'R**AISING AWARENESS' ALMOST ALWAYS demands the appalling premise that the awareness raiser knows more than those who they dream will become aware. However, in a novel twist of the fates, I actually don't know about anything except for my own moderate and petty struggle with a limited range of severe food allergies, and still often withhold potato chips from gluten-intolerant people because in my brain those are made from flour and water paste which has been deep-fried and dipped in salt.

But regardless, for this diatribe blame wait-staff everywhere, since it is their metaphorical straw (through which I almost suck unannounced almond milk every time) that has broken this camel's back. I will actually die if not medically assisted within minutes of consuming egg albumen (unless it is mixed with flour and cooked - ridiculous), nuts or seafood, and my life isn't even the worst (I apologise - ostensible stoicism hardly fits the décor of one's very own tirade). Genuinely though, I can still eat chocolate (let it

be known that "you can't eat eggs, nuts or seafood, so you can't eat chocolate?" represents a failure in logic), and my allergies are miles from the worst possible, so don't let this be a pity trip.

It's just that what allergies I do have are stubbornly unsympathetic about whether or not the ingestion was accidental. They commit to no deontological ethic which might absolve the well-meaning grandmother who adds a tablespoon of peanut butter to her granddaughter's-fourth-birthday chocolate chipie biscuits. Unfortunately, in my body, this sweet and creative older lady is as culpable as the waitress who forgot to list nuts among the things that the fussy chick on Table Three "doesn't like".

And now you probably think that there could be no greater villain than these, but I'm sorry. There are. The 'woman from Whangarei' (or so she calls herself) achieved one such triumph of inconsiderate-ness. To her query regarding how "anal" I was on a scale of not making them clean the grill to making them clean the grill, I would just like to say that that depends on how obstructed she wants my respiratory tract on a scale of able to breathe to not able to breathe. So yes, very 'anal'.

That is also one of the words that I hate, by the

way, so I actually cannot write it without inverted commas, let alone respond swiftly to its application to myself. That is why I am responding to it here, actually, because at the time I couldn't be appalled and assertive at once and kind of said that I wasn't too worried by the prospect of death and that I actually think that moderately inconveniencing inconsiderate waitresses who use words I hate, who I don't know, in cities where I don't live sounds worse than death. Or words to that effect.

Fortunately, my friend George values my life more than I do and said something to her. I meanwhile sat outside ruminating on what sort of sandwiches I wouldn't get sick of if I was ever friendless and consequently unable to eat out for want of a more trustworthy advocate than myself.

So the take-home message for y'all here is that if you're in hospitality, don't make people ask you twice about allergies because you may find yourself complicit in their death. I know that there are some pretenders out these days but anaphylaxis doesn't lie. And if you're allergic, then just think of how ridiculous my coping strategy is and find a better one. Polite death is worse than a life of mild, warranted sass towards restaurant personnel (by a slender, yet persistent, margin).

# A PHILOSOPHER'S GUIDE TO VEGETARIANISM

BY KYLE SIMONSEN

**A**S PAUL MCCARTNEY SAYS: "IF ANYONE WANTS to save the planet, all they have to do is stop eating meat". Well, in the same way that "All you need is love" is a gross simplification of the pursuit of happiness, Paul understated a complex issue. However, I thought the name Paul McCartney was attention grabbing, so hopefully you're all ready to be persuaded to read on. My 5<sup>th</sup> form English teacher promised me that's how writing works.

Well, let's consider the animal rights stuff. Animals are sentient beings, they experience suffering to differing degrees (all of which we should probably be concerned about, at least a little bit). If you're merely concerned with things like cage farming and animals attaining some sufficient standard of life enjoyment, then perhaps you should just buy free range goods and sleep easy. However, what about the idea of cultivating life for the purpose of destroying it before biology has its way?

Here's an argument from Robert Nozick that's sure to make some ethics students quiver:

I really love swinging my baseball bat. I can't

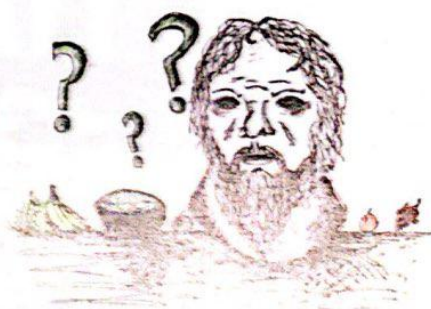
phrase that part any other way. It's better than raising my PB on leg press. However, [let's imagine because of funding cuts] the only place for me to do so is where a cow's head rests. I'm going to kill the cow if I engage in my favourite activity. What right do I have to the activity? Particularly when there are activities I can do which bring me similar pleasure in such an advanced society.

You may reject the legitimacy of animals suffering on the grounds it lacks the permanence of human experience, or that it cannot be measured. The first of these claims is hardly waterproof, the second is total horse shit because no one has a scale for pain. You can't seriously expect to measure pain accurately on a scale of one to ten, back off doc.

Perhaps it becomes a balancing act; no rights are absolute. Surely some animal rights could function as side constraints against our experience of pleasure? Maybe we should all just side with the philosopher kings and defend our preferences by claiming that we are behaving moderately. But as far as I can see, this probably means you're one of two kinds of people:

1. Like me, someone who is convinced of the case against eating dead animals but sadly

1. If you're about to make an appeal to Ayn Rand, get in touch with me and I will fuck your shit up. Ayn Rand is a turdburglar.



lacking in the willpower to implement your ideals outside the doors of Revive Café; OR

2. Someone who believes in the right to conquer those below, idk, natural selection or some garbage. Mitochondria is the powerhouse of the cell. You have a 30% higher chance of dying from heart disease, bitch, how's that for irony?

Anyway, this is a lifestyle section. Here are some things:

- Use lots of herbs and spices (mixed herbs is not "lots"), you'll miss the taste of browned meat,
- Sign up to Revive Café's student deals for a food coma that only costs \$6 and doesn't involve dead animals,
- Velvet Burger allows you to have swap for falafel on any burger, so you can still eat 2-for-1 Tuesday,
- Eating meat is bad for the climate. You're welcome.





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## THE EDGE OF THE ABYSS

BY CAITLIN ABLEY

**I** HAVE RETURNED. I LEFT UOA TWO YEARS AGO, demoralised and steeped in regret, after a botched attempt at a Law & Arts degree. But I have come back, with the sincere hope that I could finish a degree with at least some of my sanity intact. I ditched Law altogether because I am not disciplined/delusional/masochistic enough to put myself through that soul-destroying drudgery for three more years. That leaves me with my BA.

Unfortunately for me, and the thousands of other Arts students at the University, the funding for Arts has apparently dried up. Vice Chancellor Stuart McCutcheon blames a lack of funding from the government – he presumably says this as he reclines, smothered in baby oil, in a bath filled with molten gold. At least, I assume that's what he does with the \$700,000 he earns a year as the second-highest paid public sector employee in New Zealand. I'm all for blaming everything on John Key (child poverty, housing prices, syphilis), but forgive me if I am unwilling to accept the claim of someone so grossly overpaid that there just isn't enough money to go around. You only have to look at the stark contrast between the Business School's Owen G Glenn Building and the History Department, who were recently removed from their crum-

bling quarters after the building was deemed an earthquake risk. Surely this is an indication of inequality in funding allocation between the degrees.

**"I WILL DEFEND THE  
VALUE OF ARTS DEGREES  
TILL MY DYING DAY, BUT  
THERE IS TOO MUCH  
MISERABLE TRUTH IN  
THE WIDELY-HELD BELIEF  
THAT THEY AREN'T  
WORTHWHILE ANY MORE."**

Regardless of the reasons for it, the absence of adequate financial support has reduced Arts to a barren wasteland. All my papers now combine Stage II and Stage III into one course. This means that the lecturer has to teach more generalised material to cover the assessment schedules of both stages. This is unfortunate, but not insurmountable. The rationale is that more directed learning will take place in tutorials, with the tutor running a programme that is more specific to Stage II or III. This is now redundant as there isn't enough money for tutorials; instead, we have "discussion" periods. The entire class sits in front of the lecturer as they attempt to facilitate lively debate amongst stu-

dents who, as a general rule, are often too shy or self-conscious to speak up in front of a large audience. The personal, intimate nature of tutorials was one of the cornerstones of the Arts degree. Lectures simply aren't enough to engage students and make sure they are getting the most out of their courses. Administrative staff have all but disappeared from some Arts departments, notably English, meaning lecturers spend less time on class preparation and marking, and more on bureaucratic tasks such as finding free classrooms and photocopying.

I considered trying to make this column more funny, and thus more readable. The sad fact is that the decline of the Arts just isn't something to laugh off. I will defend the value of Arts degrees till my dying day, but there is too much miserable truth in the widely-held belief that they aren't worthwhile any more. Students aren't coming out of Arts degrees with the same depth of knowledge and dexterity of expression as they once did, because there just isn't enough money to enable them to do so. Arts as a degree is a victim of the vile mentality that knowledge is to be gained for the sake of financial and social gain, not for the sake of knowledge itself. The University is no longer a place of learning; it is a place of business. Students have become customers, and are churned out in the most cost-effective way possible – no matter how poorly educated this leaves them.

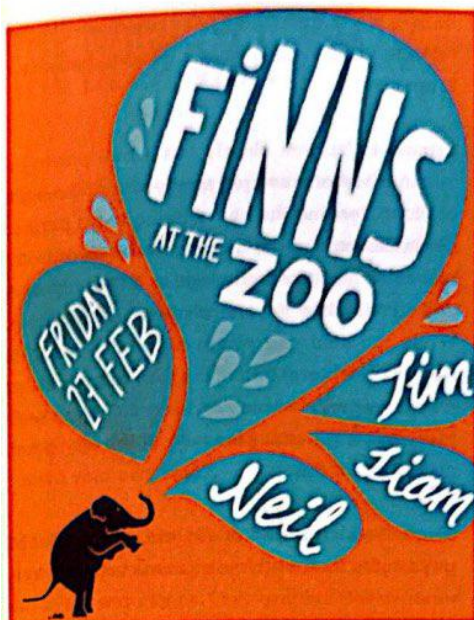


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## FINNS AT THE ZOO

FINN FAMILY

**M**Y MOST VIVID MEMORY FROM THIS CONCERT will be seeing a man in the crowd handing out some Pineapple Lumps to his mates, and humming along to some good ol' Tim, Neil and Liam Finn at the Auckland Zoo. Just poking through the setting sun were the Southern Hemisphere stars. This concert was so

bloody invoking of the Kiwi mentality, I nearly started building with some No.8 wire right then and there. Not only had Tim and Neil come back in style, but they also had bloody Liam Finn there as well! The Northland style folk was given a slight indie-fuzzy twist by the youth presence in the band. Really good to see Tim and Neil acknowledging the youth of their family, and, in a sense, passing the torch.

Amongst the uber-chill vibes of the kids and their families, the salads and the Pineapple Lumps, the Finns played a stellar set. At 7pm or so the ol' codgers rocked up into the rotunda, with their respective sons, Harper, Elroy and Liam, trailing behind them, all set to blow

**"THE BANTER BETWEEN SONGS ONLY ENHANCED THE WONDERFUL FEELING OF INCLUSION WITH THE BAND AND THEIR TIGHT-KNIT FAMILY"**

minds in a relaxed fashion. Tim and Neil kicked off the show with a couple of their old tunes. "Six Months In a Leaky Boat" was first on the playlist, with Liam Finn on bass, Elroy Finn on the drums and Harper Finn on the keyboard. The songs often had to be taken down a few keys for Neil and Tim, so in a sense there was a subtle reminder that they were pretty old, and giving it a bloody good go too. Not as easy as it once was for the brother duo. The banter between songs only enhanced the wonderful feeling of inclusion with the band and their tight-knit family, with the brothers bringing up weird stories of how Iggy Pop once desired Tim way back. Weird shit, but cool nonetheless. Songs kept coming from Liam now as well, doing an awesome acoustic rendition of "Burn Up The Road", which was bangers.

Such a great evening, with the old and the new blending together like cheese and crackers. With only subtle reminders of the coming degradation of the Finn Brother's voices, I'm sure there'll be a few more gigs out of them yet. Liam, Harper and Elroy will surely keep them on their toes, as that whole family continues to be made up of pretty cool musicians and pretty cool people.

REVIEW BY LEWIS WHEATLEY

## ANNIE HALL

DIRECTED BY WOODY ALLEN

**I** APPROACH ANY WOODY ALLEN FILM WITH trepidation. More than trepidation really, I approach with low expectations and a cheerfully sinister inner-chant of "please fail". Yet, every time my hopes are dashed and I become more and more of a fan. That inner-chant is largely due to the man himself and his vile public reputation of ("alleged") molestation and marrying a woman who was once practically his step-daughter. I really, really want him to fail, but unfortunately he just never does for me. Each movie I've seen of his has thoroughly entertained me. His movies are actually funny, actually intelligent, actually good. Since I started watching cinema in my teens (lol, pretentious) I put sanctions on both him and Roman Polanski; I didn't want to bother with auteurs that had ("alleged") sicko tendencies. But alas, *Match Point* was on Sky Movies one day after school and I thought I'd give it a go. It all, as we say, went downhill from there and somehow I've come to the point where I'm about to profess at length, and publicly, that I think *Annie Hall* is a good film.

*Annie Hall* is Woody Allen's 1977 tale of an obnoxiously neurotic stand-up comic and his volatile relationships with the women who have



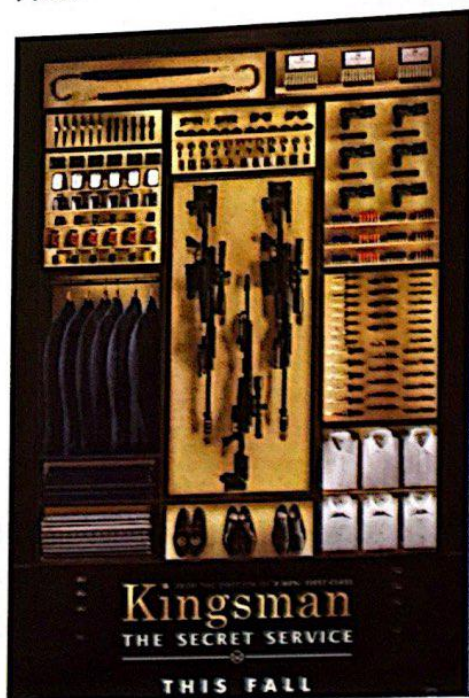
managed to fashion themselves spaces in his life. Alvy Singer (played by Allen himself) is so terribly self-absorbed and intellectual to the point of caricature that it's hard to see how one

**"IT'S AN ENERGETIC FILM, CONSTANTLY SWITCHED-ON, CONSTANTLY TALKING, NEVER REALLY TAKING A BREATH."**

could have imagined this translating from script to screen, without it turning into an utterly contrived and stupid farce. But it manages to do otherwise. Even some 40 years later it feels fresh. Fresh even in spite of all of its cinematic tropes. It's an energetic film, constantly switched-on, constantly talking, never really taking a breather. It's rollicking and uproarious. So yeah, as much as I hate to admit it, and despite the abuse I'll get from my sisters, *Annie Hall* is a film deserving of its title as a classic.

REVIEW BY CAMERON AH LOO-MATAMUA





# KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE

DIRECTED BY MATTHEW VAUGHN

**T**HIS IS A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT. If you love yourself, go and watch *Kingsman: The Secret Service*. It is two hours of outlandish violence, action sequences set to an amazing soundtrack, and bad guys having their asses handed to them by Colin Firth and his umbrella.

Don't trust the plot summaries that try and sell this movie as an ordinary spy film about a guy recruited into a secret service organisation. These descriptions fall short and do nothing to convey the perfect marriage of clever and ridiculous in *Kingsman*. Misguided kid Eggsy (Taron Egerton) is taken under Harry's (Colin Firth) wing, learning to become a proper gen-

tleman while undergoing outrageous, right tasks to see if he has what it takes to become Kingsman.

Samuel L. Jackson clearly has a ball playing villain who becomes physically sick at the sight of blood, leaving the heavy lifting to his partner (Sofia Boutella) who literally uses swords attached to her prosthetic legs to efficiently and dismember anyone challenging her. While the final gag where a Swedish prisoner became the literal butt of the joke felt somewhat icky, awesome codenames, spies adopting puppies, and a general piss take of the spy genre makes up for this.

So go. Watch a suited up Colin Firth punch bad guys in the face, and feel so much happier for it.

REVIEW BY SAMANTHA GIANOTTI

## BOOK

### RELIGION FOR ATHEISTS

BY ALAIN DE BOTTON

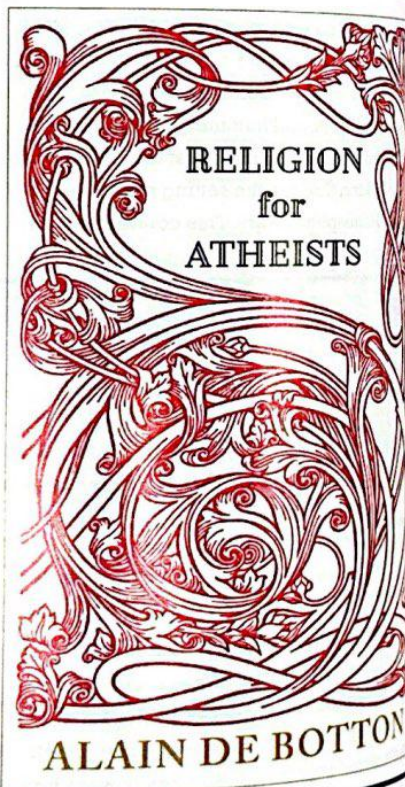
**I**F "GOD IS DEAD, AND WE HAVE KILLED HIM," as Nietzsche famously declared, how is it that we live in a world where 2.2 billion of us are Christian? Born of this reality arrives *Religion for Atheists*, in which it is proposed that atheists can 'pick and mix' from the practices of prominent religions – notably Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism – to help us lead more fulfilling lives beyond religious doctrine. With his usual clever blend of history, politics and philosophy, de Botton succeeds in creating a manual which bravely argues that the tension between religion and atheism serves no substantive purpose.

As an atheist himself, de Botton starts out stating "the obvious": God does not exist. But this book moves past metaphysical questions, instead diving straight into how religions might be put to practical use in the secular realm. It seems strange at first, but de Botton's reasoning is compelling: how can I admire Notre-Dame and not be Catholic?

Is it right to celebrate Christmas even if I am not Christian? Lectures are boring – why can't they be more like sermons? These are just some of the paradoxes we face and we can look to religion for reasonable, meaningful answers.

Religion and atheism is divided by the question of faith, but this book shows that there are several spaces in which coexistence is possible. But his style will not be to everybody's tastes, and nestled between exquisite vocabulary, I got the impression he was essentially repeating the same ideas over and over again (and if it weren't for the interesting historical inquiry, I'd have skipped pages from time to time). His literature also stems from a strong belief that philosophy's role is to help us live and to die well, so those looking for an analytical or theoretical approach will be disappointed. But all in all, this book uncovers a crucial piece of wisdom: religions understand that we can be forgetful, unkind, stubborn, and careless. Thus it would be a shame for atheists to slough off religion altogether when it has so much to teach us all.

REVIEW BY CLARK TIPENE



## PODCAST

### THE FLOP HOUSE

**I**'M NO EXPERT ON PODCASTS. I'VE NEVER attempted to record one, nor have I listened broadly to the range of podcasts available, but after listening to a podcast as funny and inviting as *The Flop House*, it didn't feel necessary to venture much further.

If a genuine appreciation for Nicolas Cage, delightfully nonsensical movie pitches, great Michael Caine impressions, terrible Daniel Craig impressions, and improvised songs before every mail segment sounds like your ideal time,

then *The Flop House* is quite literally perfect.

The show releases bi-weekly episodes, hosted by Dan McCoy and Elliott Kalan, two writers for *The Daily Show*, and their equally funny bar-keep buddy Stuart Wellington. The three friends watch a movie that has been a critical or financial flop, and proceed to riff on it for an hour, with detailed plot summaries and good-natured banter about the hammy acting, poor dialogue and gaping plot holes that are part and parcel of bad films.

Once you're a few episodes in, you begin to feel part of the party, thanks to the in-jokes and run-

ning gags that you as a listener become privy to. Some episodes have more in-jokes than others, and *Labor Day* and *After Earth* are two great accessible episodes for new listeners, while episodes like *Foodfight!* are a tour de force of entertainment that require some working up to.

Download at your leisure; enjoy the company of three new friends and their appreciative audience. I promise your experience won't be a flop. (That joke was terrible. I wish theirs are much better).

REVIEW BY SAMANTHA GIANOTTI



## THE NARROW ROAD TO THE DEEP NORTH

BY RICHARD FLANAGAN

**Genre:** Part love story, part war story.

**Plot in one sentence:** Dorrigo, a prisoner in a Japanese POW camp, is haunted by memories of his uncle's young wife, with whom he had an affair.

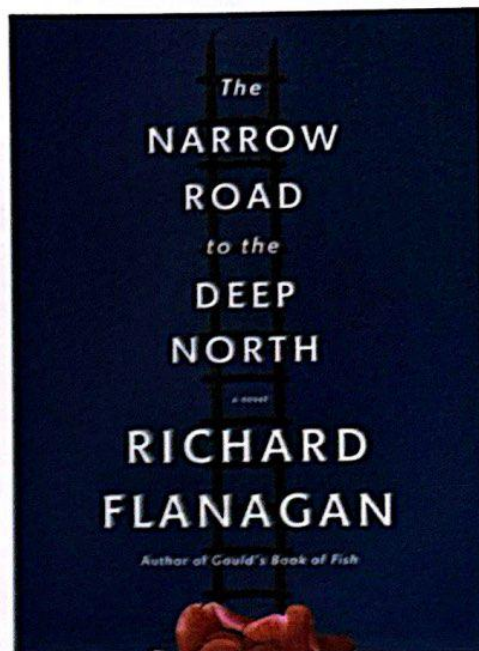
**Best quote:** "A good book leaves you wanting to reread the book. A great book compels you to reread your own soul".

**Most memorable scene:** Flanagan doesn't shy away from harrowing descriptions of men suffering in the war camps. Very graphic descriptions of men reduced to their most desperate selves, stripped of any basic human needs. The kind of story that sticks with you long after you've finished reading it.

**Level of commitment/concentration required:** It took a while to warm up to the story. The protagonist is a bit of a dick but he makes no excuses for himself, so at least he knows it. The complete lack of speech marks in the book also makes it tricky to work out what's actually being said out loud and what are just thoughts. If you're a stickler for traditional grammar rules, it might not be one for you. Also, the book jumps between time periods and characters quite quickly so keeps you on your (mental) toes.

**What makes it different:** Unlike other war novels, the men aren't fighting any glorious battles. They're merely fighting to stay alive, which makes their suffering seem all the more pointless. Also provides great insight into the men running the POW camps.

**Why you should read it:** Winner of the Man Booker Prize 2014, so good to have in your repertoire when discussing novels with pretentious (albeit cultured) arts students.



REVIEW BY HANNAH BERGIN

## THEATRE

### ONE NIGHT STAND: GREAT IDEAS, POOR FOLLOW THROUGH.

**F**OR THOSE WHO AREN'T FAMILIAR WITH THE Basement Theatre, it's something of a hipster dream and popular hang out spot for the consummate theatre-goer. A near relation of Wellington's BATS theatre in vibe, performances at the Basement are characterised by low budgets and varying quality.

It's hard to place *One Night Stand* within a particular genre: not quite stand-up comedy, but not exactly your regular production either. With just 24 hours to write, direct, and perform a series of short plays, I am reticent to criticise the pieces for sloppiness. It's unreasonable to expect something put together in such a short space of time to be as polished as a season of theatre that's been weeks or even months in the making.

But there was a certain glaring lack of attention to basic things that ultimately let the show down for me. With a couple of exceptions, there was an overall absence of thinking about the performance space. I'm guessing this stemmed either from a sense of nervousness about utilising the stage to its maximum potential, or from a directorial blunder of not realising that staging is crucial to a successful performance. Whilst one of the plays was set largely in the cramped space of an elevator, a concept with plenty of potential, it's probably not a great idea to huddle together at the very back of one side of the stage unless you want to alienate the audience sitting at the opposite end of the theatre. Diction was another issue. Given that I spent much of the evening staring at the side and/or back of actors' heads,



missing every other line only served to detract further.

High points included *Life on Mars*, a play about an unexpected group of people sent to colonise the Red Planet due to earth's apparently imminent destruction. Hilarious and fast-paced, the

**"A CERTAIN GLARING LACK OF ATTENTION TO BASIC THINGS THAT ULTIMATELY LET THE SHOW DOWN FOR ME."**

jokes hit every note, and the characters were so perfectly dysfunctional that it made for a motley yet remarkably coherent crew of misfits. The culprits were the team from the Basement's regular stand-up comedy gig, *Snort*, so it's really no wonder they came out with the winning play. Able to conjure up an entertaining theatre experience on the spot every Friday night, it's unsurprising that the popular stand-up team were on form after having a full day to throw something together. The MC, Chris Parker (also from *Snort*) was the next funniest thing about *One Night Stand*. Barista by day, comedian by night, he had the audience laughing from start to finish.

REVIEW BY ANA HARRIS





## ON THE SELF-INDULGENCE OF (TRAVEL) BLOGGING

BY COLETTE PALMER

**I** STARTED MY TRAVEL BLOG IN 2012 AS A WAY TO keep my friends and family in the loop whilst on my various overseas excursions. It was sporadically maintained until mid last year, until I moved to London and was suddenly inundated with interesting things to share with the world under the guise of "travel advice", "tips", or "guidance".

Is it really though? Who am I to advise people of where they should and shouldn't go on their travels? I'm making it up as I go along and if my blog offers any kind of "guidance", it should be that others do the same. As figuring it out is half the adventure.

I probably blog for the same reason I'm sure many other bloggers do - because I'm the narcissistic product of the 21st century obsession with sharing my life online. And that's couching it nice terms. Facebook should change the 'Share' button to a 'Humble Brag' button. Whilst there is something obnoxious about posting status updates any more than weekly (if you post multiple times a day we can't be friends), blogging has a reputation as a more socially acceptable way of sharing your life with people who don't care about either way.

Don't get me wrong, my site stats are pretty good, people do appear to be reading my mus-

ings. Does anyone outside of my immediate family and close circle of friends care what majestic London landmark I visited last weekend? I'm going to venture a no, as the dearth of comments on my site can attest to. Evidently my audience (that is a far grander term than necessary) clicks on the posts out of curiosity/habit, skim reads, maybe looks at the pictures, then goes back to tweeting cat pictures.

Have I had an impact on anyone's future travel plans? Highly unlikely. Hopefully someone read the tip about eating vegetarian in Sumatra, but that's really the only life-saving piece of info I've discovered.

**"UNLESS YOU HAVE A HITCHENS-LEVEL OF INTELLECTUAL DEPTH AND PROFUNDITY, PEOPLE PROBABLY JUST WON'T CARE."**

So, am I going to stop blogging? Probably not. I don't have a rational explanation for why. I can't say it's because it's fun, because that would be a lie as well.

Travel blogging is an excellent way to record your adventures for your own records, it lets people back home know you're safe without having to write a million emails to every aunt and uncle

who has a sudden interest in your wellbeing. But if you overthink it, it won't feel like a big

anymore. Every time I eat in a foreign country I question whether not I should be photographing my food. What if I take a photo and forget the name of the restaurant? I can't blog about a meal without giving the name of the restaurant, a kind of useless blather. I would I be there? Always about content, content, thinking for an audience, not a good time.

**"I PROBABLY BLOG FOR THE SAME REASON I'M SURE MANY OTHER BLOGGERS DO - BECAUSE I'M THE NARCISSISTIC PRODUCT OF THE 21ST CENTURY OBSESSION WITH SHARING MY LIFE ONLINE."**

As you can see from the above, rambling and indulgent over thinking is rather a speciality of mine, and if you blog and it works for you, go for it. If you were thinking 'oh maybe I'll just stop blogging because I have super important things to say' (Arts students, I'm looking at you), then I advise caution. Unless you have a Hitchens-level of intellectual depth and profundity, people probably just won't care.

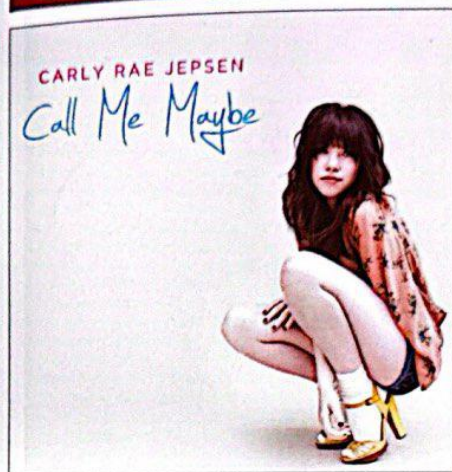
So if you're interested in reading all about everything I think you should be doing in London and beyond, check out my blog at [hopsandskips.com](http://hopsandskips.com)



# TOP TEN

## BEST AWKWARD CONVERSATION STARTERS

HERE'S CRACCUM HELPING YOU TO MAKE SOME FRIENDS AT UNIVERSITY.



### 10. HEY I JUST MET YOU, AND THIS IS CRAZY! BUT HERE'S MY NUMBER, SO CALL ME MAYBE?

While Carly Rae's one hit wonder may cut deeply into your soul everytime you hear the song, everyone secretly pines for someone to seriously say it to them. It's sweet and aware of our generation and totally not awkward at all.

### 9. I WISH HIS TOP WAS WHITER AND TIGHTER, DON'T YOU?

This line is reminiscent of the lost god of Law 121 lectures, Mohsen al Attar. However, there are some hot daddy lecturers out there who shouldn't be afraid to show off their attributes. Why not start up a friendship by talking about your shared attraction to your teacher? You could also try starting the friendship with your lecturer too if you're feeling brave and/or frisky.

### 8. WHAT CHURCH DO YOU BELONG TO?

This is something you should clarify immediately, as you wouldn't want your Catholic mother to see you bring home a Protestant significant other to dinner one night. This also happened to one of our Craccum Editorial members during the first week. Can you guess which one?

### 7. HEY DIDN'T WE MATCH ON TINDER? WHY DIDN'T YOU REPLY?

Maybe because 'Hey wanna hook up, your hot' is not the best way to start a conversation. And incorrect spellings of 'your' isn't a way to get the juices flowing.

### 6. WE HAVE THE SAME MACBOOK, OH MY GOD WE'RE LIKE SUPER CONNECTED! NEW BFF!

I don't think you could have a more basic bitch opener than anything relating to Apple products. Plus look around the room dear, we all have the same laptop as you. In fact try spotting the non-MacBook users.



### 5. HEY CAN YOU LOOK AT SOMETHING AND TELL ME IF IT LOOKS INFECTED?

Appropriate response: Don't touch me. Get the hell away from me. Why is that green?! Where is my Purell?! I need a shower.

### 4. HAVE YOU FOUND JESUS? JESUS CHRIST THAT IS, OUR HOLY SAVIOUR. PRAISE HIM.

You think this is bad, just wait until it gets closer to Easter. They use chocolate to trap you into a conversation about his sacrifice. It's pretty rude of them, considering Easter is about celebrating the Easter bunny's flight across the globe to share chocolatey treats.

### 3. THREE MORE YEARS!

Of child poverty! Of spying on the country! Of widening the gap between the rich and poor! But

at least we can enjoy more news about Max Key's Instagram account.

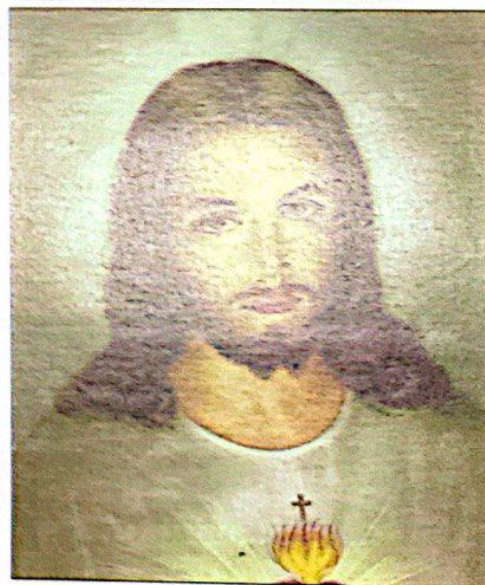
### 2. HEY WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT THE THEORY DISCUSSED ON PAGE 253 OF THE READING? I THOUGHT IT DIDN'T CONSIDER THE MARXIST PERSPECTIVE ENOUGH.

The Marxist perspective has been considered more than enough. And wow you've already read over 200 pages for the class? I still haven't read the course outline. Thanks for the insecurity that is now welling up inside of me.

### 1. I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY PEOPLE KEEP BITCHING ABOUT THEIR STUDENT DEBT, LIKE DON'T THEIR PARENTS PAY FOR IT LIKE MINE?

Best avoid this line if you want to come out of University with any friends and your body still intact.

Want to write a Top 10 Countdown? Contact [editor@craccum.co.nz](mailto:editor@craccum.co.nz) for more info, because we're running out of ideas.



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**DOUBLE DEGREE!**

THE LONG GAME

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# The People to Blame

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**Social Media:** Georgia Harris

**Proof-reader:** Ashton Babbott

## Contributors

**Columnists:** Conrad Grimshaw, Christopher Smol, Amindha Fernando, Nathan Perry, Aditya Vasudaven, Callum Lo, Tessa Naden, James Brown, Zachary Chambers, Chris Ryan

**Features:** Curwen Rolinson, Mark Fullerton, Sebastian Hartley

**Arts and Culture:** Lewis Wheatley, Cameron Ah Loo-Matamua, Samantha Gianotti, Clark Tipene, Hannah Bergin, Colette Palmer, Caitlin Abley

**News:** Clare Cambridge, Brendan Abley, John Middleton

**Lifestyle:** Nidha Khan, Augusta Connor, Kyle Simonsen, Carla Boniolo

## The Shadows' Contributor of The Week

Mark Fullerton

**SHADOWS**  
YOUR STUDENT BAR

## Call For Contributions!

START CONTRIBUTING IN 2015. OUR EMAIL IS:  
[EDITOR@CRACCUM.CO.NZ](mailto:EDITOR@CRACCUM.CO.NZ)

### editorial office

4 Alfred St  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland.  
Ph 09 923 3959.

### advertising

Ph 021 813286,  
[advertising@craccum.co.nz](mailto:advertising@craccum.co.nz)

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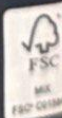
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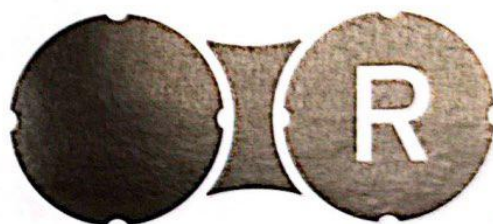
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**FINAL WEEK**

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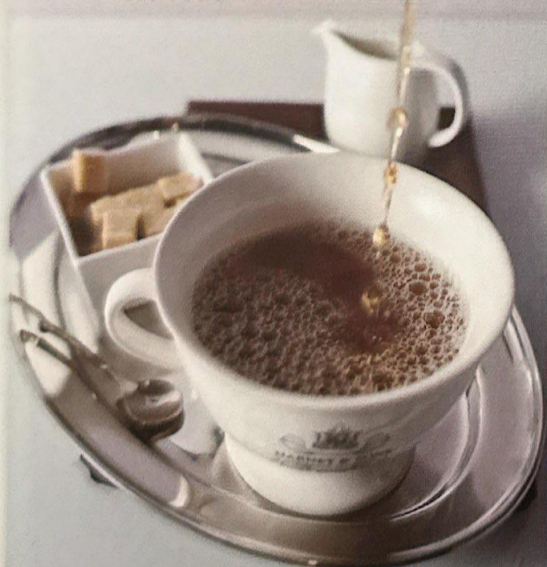
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