

hardboiled 7.6

INTERVIEWS: SEONNA HONG, OLIVER WANG, AND PROF. TAEKU LEE THE HARDBOILED GUIDE TO: BEING AN ASSHOLE SOUTH ASIAN AMERICAN IDENTITY IN 2004 ASIAN POPSTARS IN AMERICA KILL BILL VOL. 2 NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES TAKING ON DETAILS MAGAZINE

MAY 2004

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Notes from the Editors

Sometimes our college years seem like a perpetual quarter-life crisis, especially when you're involved in student groups or campus politics. Things never seem to go as smoothly as it could. People flake out and even worse, they usually don't give a shit about anyone but themselves. So we go through that process of asking, why do we even bother? Why do I even bother staying up doing layout and writing articles when only a few of you take an issue or why do I go to campus rallies for outreach when only a handful of people show up?

Some may get jaded and attempt to lead a charmed existence where they tune out all the negativity happening around campus, like the news that enrollment for black students dropped 30% this year and of course the news that the recruitment and retention centers got screwed over in the budgeting process again.

However some of you continue to fight the good fight as I witness every so often. It's definitely an uphill battle, but I believe that with our activists who continue to care, we'll get there. So when you get jaded and need some motivation, remember that someone out there notices and appreciates your efforts. But when you really get desperate remember the wise words from our tubthumping pals Chumbawamba (lyrics I'd like to think are directed towards the Man), "I get knocked down, but I get up again, you're never gonna keep me down."

gloria kim - managing editor

for those of you who care:
Million Student March on the Capitol
Join students at the capitol to fight for immigrant rights & outreach programs
Wednesday, May 5, 2004
Bus leaving @ 8:30am from Eshleman Hall,
UC Berkeley

Berkeley Asians are elite conformists. As almost half this campus is dominated by Chinese Americans, the remaining oh seven point fifty-seven percent include the Indians, Cambodians, Japanese, Koreans, Pilipinos, Thais, and other shafted minority Asian groups, we've all divided up into tight, unshakable clusters. It's comforting to know "you're not alone".

If you don't believe me, walk around campus and take notes. Pissed off MCB chicks pack libraries or classrooms, clutching lab notebooks as if someone would dare steal a peak at their test scores. Greeks flood Sproul and GBC in their matching oversized jackets, shaved and pierced, shooting cigarette smoke in your face while their too short I need platform shoes sorority sisters claim a few "cool potentials" for this Thursday's club run. Hip-hop wannabes, actors, spoken word artists, and rappers practically eat, shit, and sleep in Dwinelle and Lower Sproul. Outreachers, revolutionaries, and believers will blindly attack any hint of racism, prejudice, inequality, etc. from the narcissistic white man. On the northside things are a little quieter aside from the mumble of "fuck MCAD... integrate the inverse cotangent to get the acceleration... robots wheee!"

So. We have all come back to the mothership only to find that once again, we do not speak to so-and-so because he/she/it is a little... weird. Well, does it matter? Sure, I may be a bitter fool with nothing better to do than observe the idiocy of human nature, but just because you run with your AAA homies, drink Starbucks over pearl tea, or... gasp... don't believe in affirmative action doesn't mean I can't give you the time of day. Your groups are where your interests lie, reasonably, but don't binge off your own self-indulgence. Fuck your carefully guarded reputations and creative "Asian" identities. We're all just people, and that's the beauty of it.

tina pattaratornkosohn - story editor

After nearly three years of walking up and down Telegraph Avenue, nothing really ever catches me off guard on the street. However, one sun-drenched afternoon was stopped dead in its tracks by a certain display at a certain clothing store. WHITE BOY on the shirts. WHITE BOY on the trucker hats. WHITE BOY?! What the hell? And, then, I realize that there is a new brand of clothing called White Boy. I suppose that the manufacturing company of the clothing line was expecting a certain amount of bafflement from the consumers because right next to the clothing was a manifesto of sorts. The paper listed around 10 facts and, more accurately, the desperate attempts at explaining why any label needed to be called White Boy.

Nearly all the little tidbits were lame and trivial, but there was one that really struck my fancy. Apparently, White Boy is not a comment on how one looks like on the outside, but rather an expression of what one is like on the inside. Jeez, it just keeps getting worse. This has taken the once theoretical concept of white thinking to a whole new level. One can attain white thinking not only through years of indoctrination posing as higher education, but you can simply put on a shirt and wholeheartedly embrace your newer, better white self. You can now purchase white consciousness. Boy, do I love capitalism.

julie carl - story editor

So I was hanging out in front of the Durant Food Court (aka Asian Ghetto), just kicking rocks and killing time. And there was this dude asking for change and making jokes. I was listening to him for a while and he was pretty funny, and next thing I know he came up to me and asked, "Hey, how do you say 'Can I get some change' in Asian?" I laughed and replied, "Sorry, I don't know, I don't speak Asian." He gave me a puzzled look and asked "You're not Asian?" I explained that I was Asian, but I didn't speak "Asian." When he understood he said, "Man, you've been in California too long." To me that was pretty funny.

bryan kato - layout editor



Letters

All the letters and emails we've received over the past year have been piling up, so we thought it'd be a good idea to cram some of them in here. Enjoy.

Dear hardboiled,

A friend of mine from Berkeley just sent me the latest hardboiled issue, 6.6. I just wanted to say thank you for not forgetting me and my family and including me in your INDUS review. Every little bit of help is more than we can ask for and we take it as a blessing.

Thanks again!

Yours,
Hitesh

Greetings, hardworking staff of hardboiled, I thank you for your efforts in producing such a wonderful publication during the past semester (when I began reading it). Keep up the good work (if you're still on board for the next year).

thang vu

hardboiled - good job.

just spent a few hours reading, and now i'm going to [tell] all my friends about it. keep up the good work. i wish my school (u washington) had something like this. maybe we can work out an exchange, our sucky APIA student orgs for the hardboiled staff for a quarter. berkeley will get formal dances and bake sales, we get a start on a kick ass zine.

kuang chen

Hiya crazy kids!

I just want to compliment the staff on your hard-work and dedication. It definitely reflects on the quality and insight of your mag!! Whenever I feel the apathy, you kiddos always bring hope to the API community. Keep trucking!!

Much Love,
Karen Cai (UCSB)

Hi,

I am a pretty regular reader of your magazine (too bad you guys only publish once a month) and the recent issue on sex in the API community is pretty good. Issues such as domestic violence and sexual health is very important in the API community. One part of this issue i didn't really like is the API male counter point.

First of all, it's far too short. The response does not go too deep into anything other than to say "yes, people are emotional about interracial dating, but there are far more important things to discuss other than this issue." But from reading the letter sent to Hardboiled [4.1], it seems to that this issue is very hot among the API male. If someone is will to go as far as to say something like this, there must be a coherent voice to deal with it.

In contrast, the API female counter point is much more detailed. It explores the Ricer and FOB stereotypes and actually explains reasoning. But the author could have been more sensitive, the view of the FOB male is far too negative. FOBs do a lot of fun things too, want me to show you? =)

So the main point of this email is to say, "how come there isn't a coherent API male response?" It's not like there are no males on the staff.

Sincerely,
Not so FOB anymore

PS. funny comic, "No one can handle your Texas instrument like i can, gurl/These fingers weren't just made for writing low level algorithms, baby" Too funny.

EXPOSING THE INHUMANITY THE PLIGHT OF NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES

by junette sheen

The media is one of modern society's greatest creations. It has tremendous influence but tends to abuse that power. The media is manipulative, deceptive, and untrustworthy, but it can also be a lifesaver, an implementer of justice, and a beacon of realization, as I recognized three Saturdays ago. On April 10th Cal's 14th annual API Issues Conference held various workshops addressing sundry Asian and Asian American topics of interest were part of the agenda. I attended a worship entitled "North Korean Refugees: A Human Rights Crisis" at which author, Helie Lee, and a representative of the US Committee for Human Rights in North Korea spoke and screened Seoul Train, a documentary. Seoul Train was not about the Korean party nightlife, as the title suggests, but about the North Korean refugee situation. Directed by Jim Butterworth, Aaron Lubarsky, and Lisa Sleeth, *Seoul Train* tells the mostly unknown story of the Chinese "underground railroad" through which North Korean refugees escape. Ironically, North Korean refugees escape from one communist country, only to enter another, where they still face unremitting risk. The clip of *Seoul Train* that was shown portrayed two different families' attempts to defect from North Korea permanently.

Since these refugees will be turned back to North Korea if caught within China, it has become increasingly harder for refugees to escape. The hope and excitement of the first family in the segment slowly seeps out as they chatter about their reunion with family members in South Korea, but in fact, you later find that they become caught and the "Korean Robin Hood" who had been helping them, arrested. Although the family's fate is unknown, previous attempted escapees have been shot on the spot or incarcerated for three family generations, so one can assume that this family's failed attempt has led to an unhappier fate. As one imagines how they were punished, one cannot help but be left with a sick feeling in one's stomach and the discomfort of worry and concern.

The second family in the segment of *Seoul Train* plans to rush into a foreign consulate within China where they will beg for amnesty. Instead of the men pushing aside guards so that the women and child could escape safely first according to the original plan, the men stricken with a mix of fear and adrenaline themselves run in first without stopping the guards. The women and child are caught by the guards and dragged outside to official Chinese territory. Luckily for this family the entire event was filmed on security cameras from the consulate and their misfortunate went on to be widely televised. The heartbreak scene of the guards physically restraining a woman, clawing desperately for her life and the toddler who is thrown mercilessly to the ground became part of the nightly news, and due to strong public disapproval, the family was able to leave China safely and enter South Korea. Their lives were saved by the media.

What about the millions of people still living in North Korea? What about the countless attempted escapees

who have been sent back to horrible conditions in North Korea? These conditions include famine, an inhumane prisoner system, and injustices ingrown into the society. The story of Helie Lee's family perfectly exhibits the conditions in North Korea. Lee wrote *In the Absence of Sun* about her family's attempts to reunite her uncle's family in

the famine. North Korean society functions in a communal basis where neighbors spy on neighbors. When one family does wrong, its neighbors and other family members must suffer. It seems as though a sense of community, trust, and loyalty cannot flourish or even become founded when neighbors and family are set against each other.

At the conference, a fellow speaker began to question Helie Lee. Her bottom line was that she doubted the truth of the severity of the conditions in North Korea. My initial reaction was outrage. How dare she doubt these people? Would they bear so much pain if they didn't think it was worth leaving North Korea? The first thing I thought of was the woman in the documentary who said she would rather commit suicide if they failed to defect. As a fellow Korean, I wondered about the woman challenging the facts. Didn't she feel the tug of sadness when she was watching these families? Didn't the plight of these helpless people make her long to gain superpowers to change the world and change this situation? I know I did. I especially could not understand her because as a fellow Korean, shouldn't she feel as I did? But I realize that there is no necessary connection between one's identity and where one's sympathies lie. Look at the creators of *Seoul Train*: they are not Korean, yet they see the injustice in North Korea. The Chinese government should be held accountable for the plight of North Korean refugees in China. It is simply wrong to send back people who will most definitely be punished and even killed.

In the big bad world of global capitalism, it is not about being right or wrong. It is about politics. "Who can get away with what. What can't we do for fear of pissing them off. How do we dance around this topic..." and the only thing that seems to be able to breach this political blockade seems to be the media. Lee spoke of how more recent attempts to deliver refugees from China are always accompanied by cameras. Those working in the Underground Railroad realize the media's power and are trying to use it for the sake of the refugees. Yet even now, it is not often that you see the topic of North Korean refugees broadcasted every day and the injustice of their situation pronounced by every respected higher authority. Hopefully with the release of *Seoul Train* this summer, people will become more aware, and realize, as I did, the gravity and injustice of this situation.

I've asked a lot of questions, but as Albert Einstein said, "Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning," for once we stop questioning and pushing for justice, there is no hope for these refugees.



North Korea with her grandmother in South Korea. During the workshop, she further explained the suffering of her uncle's family. Her uncle and his family were imprisoned because the government learned that before the division of Korea, his parents had been wealthy and Christian. For that "crime" he and his family were sent to a prison in which no food was provided. Due to their resourcefulness, they were able to plant and grow the bare minimum to survive. Lee also explained that less than \$300 was enough to buy her nine-person family out of North Korea because it was enough to bribe the guards, who also were suffering due to

"Ironically, North Korean refugees escape from one communist country, only to enter another where they still face unremitting risk."

UC Berkeley

Is No Place For Diversity

by julie carl

UC Regent John Moores and His Problem With Poor High School Students

Apparently the University of California at Berkeley is no place for diversity. In a move that would have had Ward Connerly grinning like a baby, fellow UC Regent John Moores lamented the fall of white, upper-class domination of the Cal campus in *Forbes Magazine*, a bible to yuppies everywhere. Writing from a particularly anachronistic and conservative point of view, Moores not only goes after the admittance of large amounts of students of color into UC Berkeley but also claims that outreach programs, which aid minority, low-income students to adequately prepare for college, are a complete waste of money. Reciting the ever-evolving rhetoric of meritocracy, Moores single-handedly calls for the "whitening" of this great university. Even the polished political correctness of his writing can not hide the racist stirrings that lie immediately below the surface.

Moores' complaints begin with his claim that UC Berkeley is accepting too many under-qualified applicants with low SAT scores. He all too briefly mentions that the SATs are not comprehensive or even accurate in gauging a student's ability to succeed on the university level. However, with that said, Moores states that it is rather irresponsible for the university to allow students who "obviously" do not have the adequate knowledge to compete with the rest of the student population. He makes the much anticipated move of equating educational achievement with a single standardized test.

The Scholastic Aptitude Test, more popularly known as the SAT, has been used to identify a student's verbal and mathematical abilities since the turn of the 20th century. The very first SAT was administered in 1901. However, it has not been until the last few decades that this one test has come to effectively alter a person's future. Colleges and universities have recently been taking a student's high school grade point average and the SAT score as two major components in the criteria for admission. Factors such as parents' educational backgrounds, personal hardships, and leadership skills are also taken into consideration, especially at campuses like UC Berkeley, . However, the prominent role that the SATs have come to play in one's academic career is quite undeniable.

"The SATs have been found to be synonymous with average family income. The higher the parents' income, the higher the SAT score..."

Moores clearly disregards much of the controversy that has surrounded the SAT's since the late 1970's, when Ralph Nader took a deeper look into ETS (Educational Testing Service) and their manufacturing of the SATs. Nader established that the test was biased against minorities and those from a lower income stratum. The SATs have been found to be synonymous with average family income. The higher the parents' income, the higher the SAT score, proving once and for all that the SATs did not accurately measure one's ability to succeed as it does the ability of one's parent to pay for SAT schools, which have blossomed like wild weeds in suburban communities all across the nation. If one can adequately prepare for the test by attending these special schools, then the advantage lies solely with those who have access to them.

The upholding of the SATs as an adequate measure of one's academic ability is only part of Moores' argument in his article. He equates the lowered SAT standards directly with the admittance of students of color into the university. Moores conveniently uses statistics in order to state that somehow

students of color are being unfairly admitted. He does not even take into consideration the high school grade point averages of the very students, who he accuses of having embarrassingly low SAT scores. He does not take into consideration the high school environments or the economic backgrounds of the students. For Moores, the SAT score is somehow completely separate from all aspects of a student's life. It as though this one test alone can truly capture the essence of an incoming freshman.

Perhaps it is this very same outlook that has led to the continual decrease in the entrance of students of color in the incoming freshman class of 2004 at Berkeley. While the number of white students admitted to Cal has increased by 10.6%, non-white students have not been so fortunate. According to the official press release from UC Berkeley, the number of African American students enrolling in 2004 has decreased by 29.2% while the Latino and Native American student admissions have dropped 7.3% and 21.6% respectively. Although Cal's admission policies do not strictly go along the basis of GPA and SAT scores, the hikes in student tuition as well as the cutting of funds to outreach programs have resulted in the obvious decline in heterogeneity on campus.

"Moores' complaints begin with his claim that UC Berkeley is accepting too many under-qualified applicants with low SAT scores."

The API student population on campus seems to be held closely to Moores' heart. He grieves over the many API high school students who have been rejected from Berkeley because their spots have been filled by darker, not-so-smart peers. It is nearly laughable how Moores does not argue for the plight of white students, who are also suffering from a case of apparent reverse racism, but he cuts straight to the Asians. His pathetic and blatant attempt to cling onto the model minority myth as a way to cut down other racialized minorities is revealing of his need to place the API student population as a buffer zone for his battle lines. Moores has no problem spouting out statistics that support his "those Asians are so good" theory but fails to catch the subtleties that exist within the API student population itself. Is he referring to the students of East Asian descent or those of Southeast Asian background when he uses the term "Asian American?" Or do all Asians look too much alike for him to tell that there are differences at all?

Viewing outreach programs as frivolous attempts to unfairly uplift the poor and the racialized is what has led California to become a thriving industry for the prison-industrial complex, while schools of all levels are drying up. Through it all, Moores has a solution to maintaining an exclusive university. He kindly suggests that students who come from less "distinguished" backgrounds attend community colleges, where they will be intellectually titillated on a more appropriate level. This way all the upper middle-class kids from gated communities all over the state can be accepted into Cal, to be taught to preserve class and racial boundaries at all cost. Perhaps, John Moores should resign from the Board of UC Regents and approach Bob Jones University, where until 2000 inter-racial dating was prohibited. His despicable brand of intolerance and ignorance renders him as being harmful to all those associated with him, including the students at UC Berkeley. After all, the only thing worse than racism that slaps one's face is racism that sneaks around only to stab one in the back.



The hardboiled Guide to:

Being An Asshole

by phillip taw

"Why Should I Become an Asshole?"

Forget everything your parents told you about manners. The sad truth in life is that Assholes take what they want and the meek only get what's given to them.

I came to realize this while brooding over the one-year anniversary of the last time I got laid. Why, I thought, is this dry spell lasting so long? I tried enumerating my possible faults and found I had only one: being too perfect. I couldn't imagine a reason why any woman wouldn't want me. Then, while reading an article about Bush's "steady leadership in times of change", the answer Courtney Love'd its way into my head. Knocking shit over and stuff, ruining the quiet dinner party that was my social decorum. Being nice is for suckers—being an Asshole is for rock stars.

Everybody Loves an Asshole

Just think about it. Assholes get everything they want. Arnold Schwarzenegger is a huge Asshole, but he wanted to be governor and he got it. And let's not forget all the boobies he's squeezed. And millions of people all over the world protested against the war in Iraq, but there's no stopping an Asshole as big as Bush.

You might be saying to yourself, I don't want people to call me an Asshole! But the wonderful thing about being an Asshole, if done properly, is that no one will call you an Asshole. Sure, a handful might secretly hate you and make passive aggressive comments, but they'll have no impact on your life.

Its Good to Be an Asshole

But as far as the Assholes are concerned, life is good. They drive their SUVs and can't understand why other people are so frustrated all the time. Not that they really care, of course – they have themselves to think about.

Ensure Proper Asshole Etiquette

Before you run out the door to commit some Assholic acts, be sure you're being an Asshole and not a dick. What's the difference? Huge. Being an Asshole is putting yourself first before everyone else. It's taking the credit for someone else's work. It's leaving your cell on at the movies because your friend Shantay might want to hang out afterwards. It's looking at "take a penny, leave a penny" and seeing "Free fucking pennies!" Just keep in mind, being an Asshole should get you laid, promoted, or both. For example, cheating on your girlfriend with her best friend is classic Asshole. Taking a dump on someone's pillow, on the other hand, is just being a dick (unless the pillow was asking for it). Thus, when it comes to committing Asshole acts, remember what Shylock once said, "choose wisely."

So here's some Asshole etiquette. First, we all know that race, although highly influential on our habits and customs, has nothing to do with a person's character, but some folks out there don't. There are many who carry the mental image of obedient Asians. This is where being an Asshole comes in. I know most of you are already Assholes to family members and fellow Asian friends, but these Asshole moments have no impact on how non-Asians view Asian-Americans. We have to branch out and gregariously seek out diverse groups if we ever hope to be Assholes to them. One white person will tell two white people, and they'll tell two white people, and so on and so forth. Before you know it, Kevin Bacon will be wondering how he's connected to you.

But, Seriously For a Minute

But jokes aside, I truly believe that if we all tried to be more of an Asshole in selective aspects of our lives, Asian Americans could easily shatter the glass ceiling with a mighty flip of the bird. I see so many Asian Americans working heartily up the ladder at corporations, firms, but never once thinking about how they could help their brothers and sisters. They don't teach IDGAF in school.

And Assholism can easily correlate to political gains. In fact, it's part of the qualifications. I challenge anyone to name a politician who isn't an Asshole. If any of you out there should ever run for a political office, consider running under the Republican Party.

Asshole History and Politics

I was talking to my father, a retired Asshole, about Colin Powell and his support of Affirmative Action. My dad said, "He has to support it because he's black." Nah, dude. He knows we need affirmative action because he's black. He had to be Republican to make it. Affirmative Action was the invitation; the Republican Party was the ride.

Go Out and Be the Best Asshole You Can Be!

The most rewarding reward that will be rewarded from being selfish and egotistical will be the gradual shift in society. People won't be calling you an Asshole – not if you get it right. Your arrogance will be considered as confidence, womanizing will be thought of as romantic, and fucking over poor people to get rich will just be part of being a businessman. (Who wants to marry an Asian Millionaire? Everyone you wouldn't mind fucking over) Sure, there will be some playa haters who will take any given chance to call you names, but that comes with the territory we call success. And you've earned this success – you're an Asshole.

O-Dub Interview

O-Dub Interview

O-Dub Interview

O-Dub Interview

by kristopher capello

Oliver Wang is a straight-up god to many young hip-hop geeks: with his carefully crafted prose, he has, since 1994, added a unique voice to the often banal world of Hip-Hop journalism. His writing has been published in just about every big league hip-hop magazine including the Source and Vibe, not to mention the Village Voice, Urb, and the SF Bay Guardian among others. While many would be content with such achievements, O-Dub has raised the bar and is on the final step to reaching the next level: he is currently finishing up his PhD dissertation in Ethnic Studies here at Berkeley. Luckily for anyone who ever comes into contact with him, all of Wang's achievements have not shaped an elitist or a bore-you-to-death pop culture analyst. Far from it, O-dub is always down to share his thoughts even with the lowliest of new jacks. He took time from his busy schedule to answer a few random questions I had for him ranging from the state of the Asian American community to his dissertation to good old hip-hop.

hb: Like all ethnic groups, the Asian American community as a whole is always changing, speaking broadly, can you identify some specific changes in the community that you have witnessed or experienced?

There have been many major shifts but I think one of the most important that will have important implications for the future is that increasingly, APIs are growing up in communities in close proximity to other APIs. I think when I was growing up in the 1980's, that was one of the first generations where you started to see this happening outside the older ethnic enclaves but when I was in grade school, I was usually one of only a handful of APIs in my class. By the time I went to high school though, 30% of my school was API (I hear it's over 50% now). I'm not completely sure what long-term implications this has except that I think APIs will benefit from having a local community rather than feeling isolated and marginalized (a recurring theme you see with people from older generations who grew up as a tiny minority within their neighborhoods).

What for you is the most pressing issue that needs to be addressed within the community?

I can't identify the MOST pressing - there are so many important issues that confront APIs. I think one of the more salient ones though is the struggle to establish more of a political footing. I don't simply mean in terms of political office, though that's important too, but just having some clout as a community in being able to make our needs better recognized and addressed at the institutional level. Part of that comes with increasing numbers but part of it also is on us to find ways of bridging our diverse agendas.

Your PhD dissertation is on the Bay Area Pilipino Mobile DJ scene. How did you choose that topic?

I've been interested in how Asian Americans participate in popular music since I was an undergrad. The Filipino American DJ community has such a rich and important history - I knew many of these DJs personally and professionally and it dawned on me that very few people knew anything about their community's history despite its size and longevity. I wanted to understand how DJing came to be so popular within these teenage Filipino circles and what they got out of the experience.

Were the DJs of the Bay Area deep into the Hip-Hop culture of New York and the east? Or did they forge a new identity for the DJ?

I can't say for sure - I only moved up here in 1990, by which time, I'm sure there was vast interest in hip-hop in the Bay Area. Among the Filipino DJs though, the early ones became DJs at a time prior to hip-hop national (let alone global) prominence. They were more into post-disco club music, high-energy, freestyle and then, by the mid-1980s, you start hearing more hip-hop being integrated. I'm not sure what you mean by a "new identity for the DJ"? Could you elaborate?

When I asked about the "new identity for the DJ," I was referring to the concept of DJ as musician. Compared to the more of an impresario position that DJs in New

York at the time filled, it seems like these (Bay Area) DJs began to be more known for their skills than attributes like their record collection or party rocking ability. Were the Filipino American Bay Area DJs the pioneers in elevating the "artistry" or musicianship of the DJ?

In short, yes. They borrowed styles from elsewhere too but the Bay's DJs were the first to really introduce and innovate the idea of DJ band with each member taking on specific roles in the ensemble. That plus their scratching styles were conscious creations by artists trying always find new ways to make new sounds.

Is there a risk of over-intellectualizing hip-hop?

Only if means you stop enjoying it on a visceral, passionate level. There's nothing wrong with approaching culture from the head so long as it doesn't leave your heart. That may sound corny but especially as a journalist and a scholar, it's incredibly important for me to remember what it is about music or culture in general that inspires me on a level that I can't always articulate academically.

What do you think of the state of music journalism?

There are definitely points of brilliance but it's mostly dim out there. The problem is that as media monopolization has become stronger over the last 20 years, it's helped collapse the critical distance between editorial and financial objectives. Magazines are increasingly beholden to their advertisers and while I understand the fiscal realities of that, it also means that content is often times constrained by concerns that have nothing to do with the editorial side of journalism but are largely market driven. That does not make for very good journalism as you well might imagine. On the other hand, I think the spread of the Internet is creating alternative modes of reporting and criticism - much of it isn't written very well but the content, at least, is less fettered.

Is there enough dialog about race within mainstream media?

Not at all. Americans have this myopic belief that social history is linear and progressive - that things are always getting better. We assume that the civil rights movements of the 1950s all but cured racism and that because everyone can use the same bathrooms and drinking faucets, everything must be fine in the world. The truth though is that while more unabashed, blatant forms of racism have receded underground (though still alive and well on right-wing talk radio), we still have tremendous forms of racial discrimination within our institutions: from education to health care to the criminal justice system to housing, etc. I think people are really afraid to talk about race though and you have to credit the Right with a brilliant campaign since the Reagan era to make conversations about race seem reactionary and "P.C." By doing so, they've helped derail more constructive conversations about the persistence of racism in our social fabric and for the most part, the mainstream media has gone right along with that.

So long as this dialogue is suppressed, it's just going to build tensions that will likely find other ways of erupting into society. I'm not trying to be a doomsayer but as America is headed towards a no-majority population by 2050, that's going to create a lot of points of tension between an increasingly shrinking white and black population and the increasing Latino and Asian communities.

Should race be an issue in the discussion of art?

I think it's a legitimate issue but it doesn't have to be part of EVERY conversation about art. The thing is: I don't think you can ignore race but you also don't have to build race into every dialogue. The example that's been really cogent for me this semester has been the whole William Hung phenomenon (my students know I have a mini-obsession over this). He's taken all kinds of flak for being some kind of walking stereotype of FOBism. I agree with that argument to a small degree but really, Hung's popular not because he's Asian but because he comes off as this incredibly sincere personality who appeals the awkward person inside all of us. I think race is a legitimate issue to raise but I think it's misguided to claim that Hung's popularity is ALL about race. There's a balance you have to maintain.



TAKING ON THE BIG FAT BULLY: THE STRUGGLE TO BEAT DOWN DETAILS MAGAZINE

by kristopher capello

Found on page 52 of *Details*' April 2004 issue, writer Whitney McNally uses food and homosexual sex entendres to spoof the stereotypical Gay and Asian man for a laugh. ("Whether you're into shrimp balls or shaved balls, entering the dragon requires imperial tastes") Each part of the model is scrutinized; from his hairless chest to his "ladyboy" fingers to designer garments as being possible clues that may help decipher the great mystery. Is he gay or Asian? Gay men, as portrayed here, only care about sex, while the Asian male is only concerned with food or is simply again portrayed as effeminate. McNally takes the most base of stereotypes of the two communities and builds a whole pointless piece upon them.

Many within the API community are understandably outraged and have demanded an apology from *Details* along with the firing of Whitney McNally. A petition to advertisers speaks of the racism in the article asking for signatures to destroy and "disassemble" *Details* magazine and to ensure that Whitney McNally is never published again. "We are not asking for a public apology," the petition states, "that will not correct this. We are going to crumble *Details* magazine altogether by going after every advertiser in the magazine." In addition to the petition, Internet forums are buzzing with people eager to share their outrage (not a few times, "Whitey" McNally, as she is fondly referred to in online forums, has been the focus of longwinded threats as a representative for all racists), everyone has something to say, and the righteous indignation is quite universal at this "thinly veiled racism."

Details has responded with an apology statement and will, in the June/July issue, print a full page apology by the editor who takes total blame for the piece. Along with the editor Daniel Peres' apology will be 2 pages of reactions to the piece. The decisions on how to address the uproar were announced during a meeting with various API groups on April 22, 2004. Along with the printed addresses to the column, the magazine says that it will look into

changing its internal workings and are open to diversity training. Additionally, with demands from the API groups to include "fair and balanced portrayals of Asian Americans," 4 images of APIs will be featured in the magazine before the year's end (at least 2 of the included APIs being from the LGBT communities). Finally, Peres' statements suggest that the entire "Gay or fill-in-the-blank" series will probably end.

What is concerning, in addition to the article itself (which contains homophobia and racism that is not veiled at all), was the initial lack of support from the API to the LGBT community. Some people within the API community did not seem to give a damn about the fact that the article perpetuated negative stereotypes about Gay as well as Asian American men. Instead, they were too busy attempting to assert their outrage at being once again the butt of the effeminate Asian man jokes.

In situations such as these, two communities, the API and LGBT, have issues at stake because of this article, but only one community recognized the power of mobilizing as many people as possible. It is unfortunate that such tunnel vision continues to exist. GLAAD issued a statement on March 24th calling out both the homophobia and the racism in the piece. They chose not only to focus on the homophobia, but the fact that the article is indeed defamatory to both groups. One line from the GLAAD statement points out, "*Details* gets to know the diversity of both LGBT and API people, this piece loses its truth - and thereby its humor value. Do make us laugh but not at the expense of entire populations."

Meanwhile, the petition from Asians Against Ignorance with all of its rage and venom, simply repeated the point that by withholding funds, the evil media juggernaut *Details* is sure to crumble, and with it, the monolith of racism focused at APIs. By incorporating every instance of racism, (Sign this petition if you are ashamed every time you see William Hung on TV) the petition seeks to use *Details* as the beginning of the end of prejudice, but

only the prejudice that specifically affects them. Additionally, most published articles written by APIs also only seemed to focus on the issue of racism, neglecting to provide or only giving a cursory criticism of the LGBT prejudice and stereotypes.

Yet, it is the article that needs to be criticized the most harshly, and it has been hit from a variety of sides. It is dangerous in more ways than simply its overt racist content. The official public response from *Details* does not go far enough to address the issues that it chose to bring up by publishing the piece. With an increase in hate crimes nationwide and the raising awareness and dialog regarding Gay marriage and rights, there is an undercurrent of homophobia that, along with racial prejudice, must be combated. Like the 1980's, when prejudice against Asians was on the rise, today the rhetoric of "protecting marriage" from the inferred Gay threat is allowing for homophobia to be openly stated in public arenas.

The article, and in fact *Details*' entire "Gay or fill-in-the-blanks" series reveals a level of ignorance and insensitivity to these pressing issues by the publication's editors and publishers. While in a way the series is a chance for everyone to confront their stereotypes of LGBT people, it also reinforces those stereotypes that ignorant people base their prejudices on; only a savvy reader would really take the time to look deeper into the article to analyze and confront the problems with his own and society's prejudicial views. Instead, most of the *Details* readership will just get the message that it is acceptable to categorize and mock the LGBT and API communities. *Details* showed an extreme level of irresponsibility by allowing "Gay or Asian" to go to print, and they must be shown the error of their ways. But one community cannot do this alone. The eventual cooperation of the two communities resulted in substantial action from the magazine, but success came only after the cooperation and organization was achieved. Just more proof that the struggle is a collaborative effort.



all images courtesy of www.seonnahong.com

Two More Hours For Seonna Hong

by gloria kim

While following a trail of artists' links a year ago, I randomly clicked on a link entitled "Seonna Hong." Perhaps the fact that I have K-dar made it not so random, but in any case, I was elated with my find. Seonna Hong is a flourishing Korean American artist working in background animation for Nickelodeon's "My Life as a Teenage Robot," while also managing to churn out a number of remarkable pieces for solo exhibitions as well. Counting Disney artist Mary Blair among her influences, Hong's work has a retro '50's flair, with a style of art that is whimsical and quite graceful.

hb: When did you first realize that you wanted be an artist?
When we got assigned group projects in elementary school and I was consistently appointed to be the one to draw the maps or the realistic diagram of the inner ear.

What was your favorite cartoon growing up?
Robotech.

In your younger years you lived in Korea for a year. I remember going there at age eight and being traumatized by the toilets in the ground. What was it like for you?
I was traumatized by having to go in a vase. Otherwise, I LOVED it. I went to Seoul Foreign School and the neighborhood kids were enthralled by the fact that we were from the States as well as with the roller skates we brought. In other words, I didn't practice my Korean as much as I should have, but it was a different world and it was fascinating and fun.

Has your Korean American background influenced your artwork?

I was definitely influenced by the artwork I found on those contraption-y pencil boxes and stationery that I first discovered while living in Korea, but I also have friends from other ethnic backgrounds that can't get enough of that stuff too (we're the grown women squealing inappropriately at the Sanrio Store), so I don't know if I would ended up there anyway regardless of my background. On another level, growing up as a minority in Orange County, I never really quite felt like I fit in until I found the art department at Cal State Long Beach and it wasn't about the color of our skin, but I finally felt like I belonged.

Since you come from an artistic family, did your parents encourage your pursuit of art as a career?

My mom's real dream was to cultivate my siblings and I into a musical trio sort of like what the Ahn Trio are today. As far as art as a career, my parents were always supportive, but I think we're all a little surprised that I'm making a living at it.

What made you decide to take the leap from being an art teacher to a full-time artist?

I loved teaching, and there's nothing like having to explain painting to a seven year old to make you really understand it yourself, I just wanted to start applying myself what I had been teaching. Then I met Tim (my husband) who introduced me to the wonderful world of animation. I saw what he was doing and met the people he was working with and wanted to try it and I've loved it ever since. As far as showing in galleries, that was also something that I wanted to venture out and do, and I feel lucky that I've been welcome at galleries across the country.

Your husband Tim Biskup is an equally fantastic artist as well. Are there any collaborative projects in the works?
Just Tigerlily for now.

Currently you are the lead background painter for Nickelodeon's "My Life as a Teenage Robot." What's it like

being an Asian American woman in the animation industry?
Let's see how do I put this, I guess because I'm on the inside looking out, I don't really see myself as an "Asian" or a "woman" working in the industry. Thankfully one is judged simply by the quality of his/her work.

You worked on the "Power Puff Girls" film. So I've got to ask, who's your favorite?
Buttercup.

Who's the signature little girl in almost all of your paintings?
I think it started out to be me, but has evolved to be Tigerlily, my daughter. It goes back and forth still.

I hear you have a doll in development. When can we expect to get our hands on one and can we expect a cat to come with it as well?
It's supposed to be released in July at Comic Con. There is going to be a cat eventually too. There has to be! The cat after all, is the "ego" to the girl's "id".

Your painting "Oversensitivity" is darker than your usual work, almost reminiscent of Yoshitomo Nara's work, and your upcoming "Railroad" exhibition seems to have the same nuances as well. Is this a new direction your artwork will be taking?

Possibly. It wasn't intentional. Different things motivate and inspire me. I think this time around I'm getting out a lot of emotional stuff, whereas other times, there's more emotional detachment. It can be as simple as wanting to incorporate a new beautiful piece of paper I found into a painting, or like with my "Princess" show, being inspired to paint fun, frilly fancy frocks. I think that's another reason why I love the animation industry so much because I'm able to apply my craft everyday, but don't have to get emotionally involved.

You count Mary Blair as one of your major influences. Who are some of your favorite contemporary artists?
As I mentioned earlier, I get influenced by lots of different things and art forms, so I'd say right now, I'm really into Michel Gondry, the bands Blonde Redhead and Devics, those new Prada ads. Forget it.

Korean women have a bad rap. What are your two cents on that matter?
Hmmm... I don't really know what the bad rap is, but in my personal experience, I don't always get the warmest reception from other Korean women. Either I don't speak enough Korean (which believe me, I try and I've bought workbooks!), or because my hair was blue or pink or they didn't like my tattoos. I don't know. Another artist Caroline Hwang is a good friend and she's a Korean woman, and my sister is one of my best friends and she's a Korean woman, and all her friends at her church are nice so I don't know. But if we're talking about the same thing, then all I can say, is I've been on the receiving end of some pretty mean looks and it wasn't fun.

To end, I thought I'll throw in a couple of Proustian questions. Which talent would you most like to have?
I wish I could cook. Not just follow a recipe, but be able to just throw something together and be able to know the difference between paprika and cumin.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Inner peace and two more hours in the day.



Kill Bill Vol. 2

by phillip taw

Quentin Tarantino is too damn good to make a bad movie. Or a racially ignorant one for that matter.

He combines otherwise racially offensive images with enough details to make you go "huh, that's interesting" and still makes you fully aware that he's fully aware of racial stereotypes.

An example? Well, here you go: In Vol. 2, we're given a flashback to the Bride's tutelage under legendary kung fu master Pai Mei, played by Gordon Liu. He is a stereotypical martial arts expert, reminiscent of The Master of the Flying Guillotine or any cheap kung fu movie made from 1965 to 1989. But before people begin to feel uncomfortable at this possibly offensive stereotype, his character suddenly shouts, among other things, "I hate the Japs!" forcing us to reassess our interpretation of his character. Because a racist movie wouldn't make a point about different Chinese dialects and a crazy old Chinese man's hatred of Japanese. This hatred of Japanese reminds not-so-culturally-aware audience members that there is a distinction between the Asians we saw in Vol. One and the Asian who's talking right now. A message to folks who wouldn't get it on their own. And Pai Mei is too over-the-top to be any genuine threat. The audience doesn't laugh because of an awful accent, or any other stereotype, but rather, at his ridiculous white hair, absurd martial art moves, and beard stroking.

And for anyone who suspects Kill Bill is needlessly two movies can be assured that these two volumes are two very different and very good movies. While the first gives us, after Tarantino's directing absence of 6 years, as much fighting and over-the-top blood squirting as we can take, the second volume teases us with fight scenes that end abruptly. Almost too abruptly, until Tarantino's dialogue makes us forget the fighting we didn't get because we're too busy listening to the characters divulge their histories. But that's not to say there isn't a fair amount of action. Tarantino wouldn't let Uma Thurman, his so-called muse, off that easily. Thurman's character is shot, buried alive, spat in the face, bonked on the head, and put through other groan-inducing scenes.

Now a week has past since I wrote the above paragraph and I wonder, was it really as good as I thought? I mean, there wasn't even one lesbian scene. He teases us with a strip club scene that goes nowhere near where we'd expect in a strip club. And sure, David Carradine was good, but will he louse up his career with a shitty scientology movie, too? We'll just have to see how this movie lover's movie stands the test of time.

"I chose quantity over quality, because quantity lasts and quality goes."
Michel Gondry

indonesian parliamentary elections

by veronica louie

Indonesia's parliamentary elections successfully took place on Monday, April 5 despite the political and economic chaos that had recently overwhelmed the country. At stake were 550 lower house seats, 128 upper house seats, and positions on local and provincial councils. It was only the second free election since the 1998 fall of Suharto, the former dictator of Indonesia. To add to the historical proceedings, 24 parties crowded the election while two notably strong groups provided much intense competition: the Golkar Party, led by Akbar Tandjung, emerged from supporters of Suharto, and the incumbent Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, led by Megawati Sukarnoputri.

Most party ideologies were based on nationalist, socialist, or religious facets, much unlike American politics. For example, Yudhoyono's Democratic Party has roots in Islam with a significant amount of support from the Muslim minority. Other notable parties including Justice and Prosperity and the National Awakening Party; have each obtained thirteen percent of the votes, taking support away from the two more popular parties. Because Indonesia is a multiparty system, unlike the dual party system of the U.S., a single party does not need a majority of the votes to win. Victory is decided by a plurality. The competition between 24 parties made it nearly impossible for a majority of voters to agree on the strongest candidate and issues. Ironically, Indonesia needed to elect a government that was unified in pursuit for democracy, a feat that depended on a single party majority.

Indonesia's current government upholds the practice of free and fair elections in a democracy, but like other developing countries, the lack of constitutional liberalism has denied full rights to its citizens. Past elected presidents have naturally fallen into dictatorship. Why? Before a country can claim to be a democratic and liberal nation, it must first extend rights and establish political institutions. Simply calling a government democratic does not guarantee that a stable economy and public will follow. This is Indonesia's downfall, an unstable economy that afflicts its citizens' well-being and living conditions.

Sadly, as much as Indonesia desires to develop a Western style of government, it seems democracy has failed in the face of political corruption. The last free and fair elections were held in 1955, where newly elected President Sukarno quickly adopted a dictatorship rule. Sukarno was replaced by Suharto, another dictator with a military background. Unsurprisingly, the military has a strong influence in the country's leadership dating back to its war for independence from the Dutch in 1949. The armed forces were respected for their victory and seen as fair representation of the people because most of the army was comprised of citizens from various parts of Indonesia. The military had two roles: national protectors against external threat and local maintenance of political and social order, especially during Suharto's rule. Suharto's own downfall in May of 1998 came as public discontent grew and opposition parties overthrew the dictator. After his thirty-two year rule over the people of Indonesia, Suharto was replaced by a dual authority in 1999. Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati Soekarnoputri, President and Vice President, had no previous experience in government. Political corruption spread like wildfire as officials began to force implementation of their policies through this naive government. Indonesia faced growing chaos as a power struggle erupted. Wahid fed his own self-interests and severely neglected the economy. Under heavy criticism, Wahid was replaced by Megawati as President of Indonesia.

Not all of the votes in the current election were properly tabulated because of the large voting population. One hundred and twenty-four million people who live in Indonesia are eligible to vote out of a population of two hundred and twenty-one million. The current results are in favor of Tandjung's Golkar party, and he has already publicly declared himself the victor. The numbers were 18.42% support for the Golkar Party and 18.39% favor for the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle. These numbers are trivial because they are based on two million votes, or only 1.6% of the voter

population. Not all of the ballots have been counted and many of the 23 other parties are insisting on a recount that could obviously change the winner. Although Indonesia houses the world's largest Muslim population, religious parties gathered less support as the population has become more secular. With the Golkar party's prospective win, this election will be the first time in four decades that the new legislature will not have representatives from the military.

Many of the voters who participated in the elections were looking to pick a party that will improve their current way of life. Megawati's incumbent party has been criticized

"As of the present, out of every 212 people, half live on only two dollars or less a day. Ten million suffer from unemployment, and thirty million are underemployed and unable to provide for their families. The effects of this election could mean a change in Indonesia's international political stance."

for not taking an active role to improve the country from the bottom up, an unfortunate consequence of a static economy that plagued her time in power. Many Indonesians blame her for not improving living standards, issues such as unemployment, poor social service programs, and corruption from within the government. As a consequence for not providing satisfactory growth and improvement as a whole, Megawati's party saw a decline in votes from 34% in 1999 to 18.39% in this year's election.

Indonesia's first direct presidential poll will also take place later this year. The president is elected for a five year term by the electoral college based on the Parliament. There are five prospective candidates who have all been nominated by a party with at least five percent of the parliamentary election votes. Retired general Wiranto formerly commanded the Indonesian army, and is responsible for various crimes of humanity in East Timor in 1999. Amien Rais represents the Muslim based parties and is a leading figure in the Muslim movement. Megawati is the former president and is running in hopes for re-election. Akbar Tandjung, leader of the Golkar Party, is also President of Parliament and is looking to gain presidency over the country. Lastly, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono who was the former Minister and General under Megawati's term is seeking to win the presidency.

Free elections are now especially critical to Indonesia's development and gradual transformation into a democracy. The parties that gain power in this election and future elections have a profound responsibility to provide Indonesians with a better government, society, and way of life. As of the present, out of every 212 people, half live on only two dollars or less a day. Ten million suffer from unemployment, and thirty million are underemployed and unable to provide for their families. The effects of this election could mean a change in Indonesia's international political stance. With a stronger government, the international financial community may be drawn to invest in the country, and Indonesia is in desperate need of foreign investors. It is necessary for outside money to flow through for economic growth to occur. Domestic demand has proven insufficient to fuel the employment of the citizens.

co-op living at cal

by alfred twu

From the beginning, the University Students' Cooperative Association, better known as the co-ops, has provided inclusive housing for everyone. In the 1930s, when students were often denied housing based on their race, the co-ops welcomed everyone in the face of hostility from the outside community as well as certain fraternities. During the World War II internment of Japanese students, the co-ops leased the Japanese Students' Club building and operated it for the duration of the war, returning it to the Japanese students afterwards.

Today, however, while APIs make up around 40% of the UC Berkeley student population, their representation in the co-ops is just over 10%, an aberration in a 1,300 person community that otherwise reflects the student population. Representatives from each co-op discussed this year's racial parity report and found that the image of the co-op system was a major factor. Specifically, three of the largest and mostly white houses were distorting the image of all the houses. Having more people, more turnover, and more parties, these houses are the limit of many students' knowledge of the co-ops.

In actuality, only a third of the people in the co-ops live in these self proclaimed "hippie houses", with the rest in small quiet houses of 17 to 50 people and apartment complexes such as Rochdale Village. Here, the population is very diverse and the atmosphere is tame. Most importantly, workshifts are done and the houses are clean. To name a few, there's Ridge House, Euclid Hall, and Hoyt Hall. Contrary to popular belief, it is easy to get a spot in these houses; one can gain seniority points by boarding or staying during the summer.

During the 2004 General Member's Meeting, Asian representation in the co-ops was discussed as part of overall recruitment and retention. Plans for the future include cleaner houses, better publicity for the small houses, outreach to transfer students, and possibly even an Asian theme house.

So, if you're looking for a place to live that's more than just a roof and four walls, give the co-ops a second look. usca.org

Where Are You Really From? South Asian American Identity in 2004

by anita bhat, mahin ibrahim, peter (tadao!) gee, and adil khan

Asian Americans comprise 41.6% of the undergraduate student population at UC Berkeley, according to the statistics provided by UCB for 2002-2003. Although the number of South Asian students is not specified, it is clearly a significant portion.

During their time at Berkeley, these South Asians occupy a wide spectrum in terms of their extracurricular involvement on campus. Some of them jump right into the Indian scene via Indus and pay the annual fee to become official members. They immediately jump feet first into learning the complex steps of *bhangra* and become intimate patrons at Blake's. For complicated political or social reasons, others opt to form ties with communities outside the narrow confines of descent. Still, others choose to identify mainly with their affiliated religious group – the Cal Muslim Students Association, Sikh Student Association, and Hindu Student Council being the most predominant.

Whichever social associations a South Asian chooses to make, the same questions of identity, culture, values, and community trouble them all. As a class project, the four of us decided to sit down with six South Asian student leaders who represent different cultural, religious, and associational backgrounds to explore these issues. The following excerpt is taken from that discussion.

How do you identify yourself? Please understand “identity” in any way you like. In your answer you may refer to ethnicity, gender, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, etc.

Salman: The first thing I am is a Muslim. Second, I am an American of Pakistani descent. That's how I would identify myself, as an American Muslim of South Asian descent.

Tejas: I would say the issue of salient identity completely depends on who you are talking to. Someone could ask you "Where are you from?" and I'll give them a different answer [depending on who asks]. If a Caucasian asks me, I would say Chicago. If it's an 'uncle' I would say, "Gujarat." "Where you're from?" has so many different connotations. It really depends on what context you're in and what you're trying to say.

But are there certain parts of your identity that you try to project and focus on?

Tejas: I don't think that there are parts of my identity I try to project consistently. It really depends on what I'm trying to do at that time. I don't want to box myself in or be defined as Midwestern conservative when I'm not, or form the stereotypes of a South Asian EECS major when I have other characteristics. It totally depends. But at the same time, I want to project my South Asian self when I'm applying to a job at Microsoft. I want people to see I do have that skillset. So it's difficult to say.

Gagandeep: I'd say I primarily identify myself as a Sikh. In terms of ethnicity or further notions of my identity, I'd say I'm Punjabi, and further than that, I'd say I'm an American citizen.

Lakshmi: I identify myself as a woman of color just because I feel like I identify with the different struggles of communities like Raza, API, and the Black community. Being raised as a person of color in the South, in rural Georgia, I feel those experiences allow me to identify with those communities.

Anu: I identify myself as a person of color. But I didn't really identify myself as a person of color until college. Unlike Lakshmi, I grew up in a mainly white city and although I had different friends who weren't all white, I didn't really think of myself as a person of color. But when I got here, I found it a lot easier to identify with the API community than the South Asian community on this campus. And so I am first a woman, a queer student, and then a South Asian. And I haven't fully comprehended what being South Asian means to me. I don't have that backing that I feel a lot of South Asian students do have.

Sudeep: I'd say for the sake of other people, I tend to often identify myself either as API or South Asian maybe along the lines of ethnicity or religion. Usually, the question I get from somebody I'm meeting for the first time is "Oh, where are you from? Where'd you grow up? What religion do you believe in?"

Could you clarify what you mean by "for the sake of others"?

Sudeep: It means that I may not identify myself like that very strongly. So, for example, when I'm meeting somebody else, I might hesitate to say "Oh I'm Indian, Indian American, South Asian, or Hindu." Growing up here I tried to have strong roots, or at least strong connection to my roots. Similarly as far as religion is concerned, I find myself not able to put myself in a category as such. Because the environment I grew up in was sort of meta-religious in a sense. I try not to think of my identity in those very small categories and rather I can adapt them to various circumstances, like you were saying. In some sense these are all very much a part of my identity. I feel like if I were to limit myself to these identities and portray myself, then I would be more prone to doing that for other people as well, and I would rather not jump to these prejudices or preconceived notions.

How do you think you would be identified by mainstream America?

Gagandeep: I think that's a very easy question because I'm confronted by mainstream America daily. Mainstream America perceives me as a Muslim for whatever reasons. Appearance is probably a key thing. I think that for their perceptions of someone who visibly expresses their faith as openly as I do like having an open beard vs. tied up beard. Numerous other perceptions like terrorist. They have very many notions.

Salman: In terms of mainstream America, if someone just looks at me they wouldn't be able to tell I'm Muslim. They could tell I'm from South Asia, or the Middle East,

(continued on opposite page)

but not that I'm Muslim. So in that case it would just be somebody from the Orient, from the third world essentially. They wouldn't be able to tell that I grew up here. Even after they interact with me, they still have this impression — they still have this other preconceived images of what Muslims are, especially after 9/11. My identity as a Muslim actually strengthened after 9/11. To be honest, that is one of the main reasons why I do identify myself as Muslim.

Tejas: [I've had the] opposite experience. Growing up in total mainstream America, in a Midwestern town, it really never occurred to me that I was South Asian. It wasn't a big part of who I was until I left that environment. In terms of my perception of what they think of me, I've always considered myself as completely assimilated into mainstream American culture... you could say "white-washed-Abercrombie-ized." It's definitely part of my identity and it definitely characterizes me to some extent. I respect the South Asian part of my culture but that's something more personal. Their perception of me is what I project to them which is "I'm one of you."

Anu: It's interesting. I don't really know what it means to be South Asian. In the sense that I feel different from Raza or Black people in sense of community they feel with members of their own community. I think that the important piece about that is mainstream America, whatever that is, knows that. It's easier in terms of the model minority thing. It's a distortion of what life is like for most South Asians in this world. And you don't see a lot of South Asians in the media or on TV...They ask "Where are you from?" and I say "Los Angeles." And they get really angry and say "Where are you *from*?" and I say "*Los Angeles!*" I don't know if other folks get that... and I think that's one of the reasons the API community has such a problem having unity.

Gagandeep: Let me clarify what I was saying a little bit. My perceptions are largely

based on experience, everyday experience walking down Telegraph, or the streets of Fresno and being called "Bin Laden." It's not something that I think I'm making up. It's something very literal to me based on those experiences.

Sudeep: I just think it's really interesting seeing from what a lot of you all have been saying, kind of like the identities you have for yourself are so much a reflection of perceptions towards you. And how our identities in general are derived from or are influenced by how people see us, it really depends on different contexts. Believe it or not, but appearance is just so unbelievably important to all this. I mean I'm not even talking about the color of our skin. Usually it's "Oh you're involved in medicine? Oh, no no no, engineering? Computer science?" I've been mistaken for Hispanic, Middle Eastern, and the usual, "Where from South Asia are you?"

Lakshmi: Similar to Tejas. My identity has been formed resisting that because I resent being white-washed and I don't appreciate that experience at all. A lot of people said "Oh you're white enough" and I'm like "No, that's not cool." My resentment for being raised like that has been brought out in college. Coming back and being like "No! I'm a person of color, and I'm proud to be a person of color, and I'm going to identify with the struggles of people of color."

Salman: I went to high school in Huntington Beach, CA — generally very suburban, very white. People would say that I was white-washed when I came here. I still felt very different from a lot of the kids there. Like on the basketball team, everybody else was white. I still couldn't do a lot of the things they could do because I had a lot of religious prohibitions. I had a lot of things that I just couldn't identify with. From those types of experiences, I was pretty sure that there was no way I could ever identify with something other than being a person of color, non-white.

Pilipino Culture Night

by tina pattaratornkosohn

It was the perfect blend of history and modernity. Traditional, conservative, home-spun family-value homeland-customs melded with up in yo' face street rhythm, beats, adolescent egomania curse history rise up and join the movement battle cries. If you were PAA, SARAP, PCN, AAA, VSA, TSA, CSA, it didn't matter that night. You could even be Portuguese, Thai, Indian, Mandarin, or Cantonese (like my fellow audience members) and still walk away from Pilipino Culture Night with an appreciation of the history, talent, common issues, struggles, and all out heart and soul of Berkeley's beloved Pilipino population.

PCN's Bayanihan was a sold out mecca that left Zellerbach in chaos. Held on the afternoon of Sunday, April 18, about 1,700 capacity filled the lower and upper levels and left intermission bathroom lines long enough to warrant a rain drenched sprint to Eshleman. Countering the pre-show roar of the crowd, the string/drum/wind pit mellowed out with jazz tunes and later renditions of pop culture songs. Audience members pored over a busy twenty-page program full of props to over a hundred cast and crewmembers. The house already knew what to anticipate and for a good ten bucks they got it.

The show began with a traditional Pilipino Singkil performance. Dancers rhythmically clap two pairs of bamboo sticks arranged in a cross while others delicately navigate their steps in between. The nostalgia of this peaceful dance was immediately followed by the appearance of a sensitive street gangsta, a highly charged religious revolutionary, a wannabe skater boi and one obnoxious, high-pitched valley girl much like the one who asks stupid questions in discussion. Before you could even comprehend what's going on, two giant tsinelas (Pilipino sandals) roll onstage and... "Welcome To Pilipino World!" A la Disneyland's Jungle Cruise on crack, this "second generation history lesson" given by a pleasantly zany tour guide takes unsuspecting, whitewashed youths through the uncharted past of Pilipinos under Spanish colonization, massive migration to the states (here "It's a Small Pilipino World" makes its debut), and the millions of government benefits left unpaid to veterans. Cheesy jokes aside, no cruise would be complete without the dance of "natives". The Bondoc Dance, according to this writer's memory, can

only be described as a throng of oiled, chiseled males, wearing nothing but cloth draped between their legs and jockeying in sync to beating music. Cue "This Land is Your Land... we will come here, by the tens of thousands..." in a nauseatingly cute off key chorus and Walt couldn't have been any prouder.

The beauty of PCN was its multifaceted palate; there was something for everyone's taste. Even the most cynical romantic can remember how first love makes the heart race, especially when the family gets involved. "Price Check on Love" was an adorable skit bridging the generation gap of all communities through that universal language of love. In this case, old school chivalry makes its modern debut as Pilipino bachelors serenade the object of their affection with a rendition of "Gimme a Little Sign" and a traditional Pandanggo Sa Ilaw candlelight dance glittered in the darkness. Other traditional courtship dances included the O, Ilaw, Pantomina, and the Spanish influenced Polkabal.

As any culture show should, PCN took this opportunity to highlight significant issues affecting their communities. In a clever break from live stage performance, a short student film called "Affliction" was shown. With a background of haunting trance beats and a fog machine, depression in college students and poverty stricken veterans were highlighted. As real as the documentary seems, a part of you can feel that pain and irony of life at Berkeley whether your family landed at Plymouth Rock or Angel Island. Evanescence's "My Immortal", sung by actress Aubrey San Pedro, was another haunting reminder that Pilipino generations have not been left unscathed by struggle and depression.

A dual skit shadowing a Pilipino American in the Philippines and a young Pilipino in America showcase the conflict between personal identities and social stigmas across cultures. Although born in different countries, two girls were raised with the same Pilipino family values, language, culture, foods, and beliefs. When they cross cultural borders, they are confronted with stereotypes by their own extended families, schools, and friends who automatically question their true identities. What does it mean to be Pilipino, American, Pilipino American. Do you need a hyphen to explain your identity? Punctuated by one of the baddest, craziest displays of choreogra-

phy (mad props to Leo Udan, Jr. and Jerald Mutia), the FilAm vs Pilipino hip-hop dance set the audience off, a true highlight and favorite moment.

A spin off of MTV's "Real Life... you think you know..." attacked another controversial Pilipino (and API) issue. Pressed by a hidden homosexual attraction and a strict Catholic school, Ricardo Antonio Navarro Domingo III has to face varying reactions of his parents, siblings, schoolmates, teachers, and the Pilipino community to his personal identity. Instead of finding the support he craves, he struggles to hide his partner and still remain outspoken about gay rights through his school community newspaper. At the heart of his issue lies his respect and, yet apprehension toward his parents, who consistently praise his cousin and sister, but never his achievements. The skit serves as a poignant reminder that all groups face unjustified scrutiny at the hands of society, especially when marginalized out of fear and silence.

In a fitting end, Bayanihan brought together the strength of all Pilipino groups in a short storyline about passion, love, anger, and ultimately the common history of the community. "My Kind of Folks" portrayed a heated rivalry between two student groups: Student Alliance Representing All Pilipinos and... everyone else not involved in (as Executive Producer Joyce Corpuz Narvaez puts it) "the MOVEMENT!" But as slightly cliché yet humorous love brings two opposing Pilipinos together, the two groups battle with an interpretation of Michael Jackson's "Beat It" before reality sets in. We are all one and the same. Perhaps different cultures have led us down the same path, we have met different people and learned different things along the way, but our identities should not tear us apart. We should revel in the common issues and fight alongside rather than apart.

PCN was about bridging Pilipino community gaps from old to new generations and across families and friends through common issues and experiences. Not only did it successfully showcase Pilipino pride, it also served a valuable lesson to other cultures that do share the same love, laughter, and honor in their communities.

ASIAN POP!

ARTISTS CROSSOVER FROM ASIA TO AMERICA

by dan nguyen

Many think it is time that Asia made its mark on the US mainstream music scene. But with lukewarm talents and lack of investment in Asian American artists on the home front, we may have to depend on our relatives from across the Pacific to do what Ricky Martin did for Latin music (hopefully without the overwhelming Ricky Martin pop persona). It seems like Asian music moguls have been preparing for this day, as they force their pop acts to integrate English lyrics in their pop songs. Now with three acts from Asia entering the market in a few months, they could very well spark an Asian craze in the music industry. Who are these acts, what are their prospects in America, and who is going to triumph in this harsh industry?

The first of the three to release a single in America this year is the popular Korean group Baby V.O.X. They were one of the most popular pop acts in Korea in the late 90's and early 2000. In fact, they were not only famous in the K-pop scene but have gathered a large fan base across Asia, especially in China and Vietnam. Baby V.O.X. has even made a few appearances in America prior to this year's upcoming debut at Asian festivals and celebrations throughout California. People who know of Baby V.O.X. are probably shocked or think it's a rumor that they are releasing an English album because they don't speak English. But the rumors are sadly false, as I have heard the pre-release song to prove it. Their new single is called "Xctasy", and is from their new Korean album suitably called *Ride West*, which features a song with Jennifer Lopez. The new single is not like their K-pop songs, but instead has more of a Hip-Hop and R&B style and features the late Tupac and rapper Floss P. from the Dr. Dre family. You might think a song with Tupac must be good by default, but the single is far from spectacular. If Baby V.O.X. plans to make this their debut song to Americans, they are in for a rude awakening. The song sounds too generic. There is nothing special about it to make it stand out. The vocals are bland, and just show they cannot hold a note. Although their English is better than expected, there is not enough singing to showcase any talent; the chorus sounds like a bunch of porn stars. Instead, the song relied heavily on rap from Floss P. and Tupac. If Baby V.O.X. thinks they can ride Tupac's fame, they are foolish. The beat is nice, but if they want to be a success in America, they need to have a stronger group single without depending on famous American artists.

A more promising act is Coco Lee, an American Born Chinese who planted her fame in Chinese pop music. This promotion is not her first debut, but her second attempt at seeking fame in the US. She released an English album in 1999 called *Just No Other Way*. The album had mild success, and her single had little airplay on radio stations. Despite dismal album sales, she was featured in many US magazines, including *Jane* and *W*, to name a few, and was No. 47 on *Maxim's Hot 100* list in 2000. In 2001, she performed at the Oscars where she sang the title song from *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*. The album gave her some recognition, but not enough to make her famous. Perhaps because Coco Lee is not a stranger to the American market, her record label, Sony Music, is giving her another chance. She is planning to release another English album at the end of the year that was delayed from release last year due to production problems. However, some critics speculate that Sony has given up on the Chinese pop star. Hopefully, that is not true because she does have a great deal of talent and can show Americans the music potential from within the Asian community. With the right song, she might earn enough success to open doors for other Asian artists who want to make it in the US pop music industry.

The most anticipated release this year is from the Japanese Pop singer Utada Hikaru. She is Japanese American and born and raised in New York City. She began her career in the second largest music industry at the age of 16. Her most famous single until now is probably *First Love*. She consistently produces number one hits and albums in Japan and Asia every year, including her recent singles collection album with over one million copies sold. Hikaru has already worked with renowned US producers like Rodney Jerkins, who has produced numerous hits with famous artists such as Brandy, Monica, and Toni Braxton.

She is also rumored to be working with the Neptunes in her upcoming US debut album. Her song is most known from the movie *Rush Hour 2* where she sings with Foxy Brown, a song featured on the soundtrack. Hikaru signed under Island Def Jam Records, and she is planning to release her album later this year under the name Utada. There is speculation that she will release a single before summer, but there is no indication that production will be finished by that time. She has great talent and singing abilities and although the music she is known for has a lot of American influence, it is still creative, unlike cheesy J-pop. Whatever single she chooses to debut will have potential. However, Hikaru's image is opposite that of the typical American pop star, and this could hurt or help her in the end. Ultimately, she has a strong chance to become the catalyst for other Asian and Asian American artists to break into the US music industry.

Whatever their talents or image might be, it will be a tough road for Asians to make in the US music industry. There have been indications of delayed albums and lack of marketing for many of them. Additionally, the Asian American population is diverse in language and culture, not big enough to support these Asian artists; Latin music has flourished in America because of the large and unified Latino population. But hopefully Americans will embrace one of these artists and make it easier for other Asians to enter the music industry sometime soon.



coco
lee



baby
vox



utada
hikaru

discussing politics with

by karrie tam

PROFESSOR TAEKU LEE

hb: Why are you interested in racial/ethnic politics, and how do you incorporate this into your class?

I think as a political scientist, most people go into the study with a set of interests about politics that really matter. To me, the politics that really matter are that what happens in this country today, a lot of it has to do with group conflict. I started graduate school in 1991-92 and the spring semester of that year was when the LA Riots occurred. And it

really was a turning point in what I decided to focus on. Entering grad school, my main interest was political philosophy, but the reality of what was happening in LA was compelling for me to shift my focus and try to understand what I think is the central question for anyone who studies American politics: what you think about what people would call the 'race problem' in the US. And the central faultlines of that question are, do you think what's happened to respective people of color throughout the course of American history is an anomaly, in terms of an exception towards the steady march towards equality that has characterized American history or do you think what's happened to people of color is part and parcel with how this country was founded and what makes this country so successful in the presence of racial and ethnic inequalities. If you ignore this question completely, you will ignore a central part of how American politics work.

What do you think are important Asian-American issues that are especially relevant today?

I think one of the most compelling political issues for Asian-Americans is whether to get more involved in formal institutional politics, such as registering to vote, deciding which party better serves your community's interests, etc or whether it is more important to work from the grassroots level and build those institutions so they wind up sharpening your focus and creating incentives and identity to make you want to register to vote and show up to vote. My bent is more towards a greater effort towards building community organizations that better articulate what are the problems that are facing our community and how can we work towards getting to a better point in dealing with these problems. And in the process, I think the incentives would naturally come to realize why it is important to get more involved in the political process and what the community needs from a more grassroots level.

What are you working on right now? Can you tell me more about this book that you are writing?

The book is really trying to urge political scientists and analysts to think more carefully about how people come to identify with parties. So the standard story in the political science literature about partisanship is you're either a Democrat or a Republican, and if you're an independent, you're an independent because either you can't decide between both or you're so alienated by the process that you choose not to think about partisanship at all. Ideologies work in different ways in different countries, and being liberal in Peru or the Phillipines does not mean that you will fit America's meaning of being "liberal." So part of what people need to do is think about what are the conditions under which immigrants like Asian Americans or Latinos come to identify as Democrat or Republican. Also, there

are distinct stories about how black and white Americans are increasingly identifying themselves as independents. So the central focus is to explain why since the 1970s there's been a twofold increase in the percentage of people who identify themselves as independents, and our argument is that the big part of the story is how race works in the United States.

Do you think there is a specific "Asian American politics," and how would you define this?

I think there are many Asian-American politics. I think that if you don't engage the political process you don't have credible information about what the actual barriers to political opportunities are in the United States. It's certainly the case that we don't see a lot of Asian American candidates and Asian-Americans as a whole across all different modes of political participation. Asian-Americans participate at a far lower rate than white Americans or black Americans. But the central question is whether or not Asian-Americans are just not interested in politics or whether or not there is any systematic barriers to their engaging in the political arena. And you can't know that question unless you actually get active in the political process, so that's why I think Asian-American activism is a good thing because it allows you to see what's going on.

Do you think there is a need for more pan-Asian solidarity, in terms of better gaining a position of power in American politics?

It's a question that Asian-Americans have been struggling with for a long time now. I think when pan-ethnicity is articulated, it is more politically potent than it has been in the past. One of the things my research shows is that pan-ethnicity in the strong form [one who believes in a pan-Asian identity] profoundly affects political orientation and makes them more likely to be political active, a Democrat, and it makes them a lot more likely to see what happens through a very racialized lense. So if you have that sense, then it can be a very strong motivating factor in terms of activism. The question is, you can't in some ways force that onto someone, and in particular, there's also a lot of well-rounded suspicion that pan-ethnicity is really this elite creation of activists and civil rights advocacy groups and also within the academy that pan-ethnicity would be a good thing within the standpoint of radical ideology.

One last question, you taught at Harvard before coming to teach at Berkeley. Which do you prefer?

Definitely here. Going into graduate school, my ideal vision was to teach at a large public university with a diverse student body, and no other college fits that description better than UC Berkeley.

LAST WEEK,

I looked like this :

YA WANNA
KNOW WHAT
HAPPENED ??

ANOTHER COMIC EXTRAVAGANZA
BROUGHT TO YOU BY
HELEN, QUEEN OF
SHITTY COMICS !!

I WAS WALKIN' TO THE
COMIC BOOK STORE

WITH A CRISP NEW \$20 BILL,

THE U.S.
OF FICKIN'
A.

INTENT ON BUYING ME
SOME COMIC BOOKS.

BUT THEN OUT OF NOWHERE,

hells ya

THESE SKINHEADS SHOWED
UP.

THEY HAD SOME GNARLY
TATTOOS!

I TRIED TO JUST HURRY
PAST,

BUT ONE CAUGHT UP WITH
ME & ASKED:



VIOLENCE

(you) HEY ! YOU'RE
FULL OF SHIT & YOUR
COMICS SUCK!

True,
I actually
fell off my
bike & my
comics are terrible. HAVE A
SHITTY SUMMER, FUCKERS.