

the Gateway

EDITORIAL

The need to know

The *Gateway* reported last week that there had been a robbery in the Students' Union Building. We stand corrected. It wasn't a robbery, but a "daring daylight hold-up and spectacular shoot-out" leaving one man wounded, according to the *Edmonton Journal*. The *Journal* also said "three masked men (an earlier story in the same paper said four men) jumped two Loomis guards; one of the gunmen was "believed to have been shot in the head." Between the competing city dailies, reporters found submachine guns, pools of blood, and, if they had looked far and wide they might even have found a witness claiming to have seen Cuban guerrillas.

"Good God!" cried the city editor, corraling the news hounds 'round the desk: "An honest-to-goodness hard news story! We won't have to run another analysis of the baleful (editor talk) Canadian economic situation. Pics! Pics! Take as many photographers as you need to get pics of wounded thugs lying in pools of their own fresh red blood. Now, where's that fake blood..."

To their credit, the hounds were quick to the scene. Even so, Police already had taken statements from witnesses to the crime. No one was talking until the Police spokesman arrived. He said there were three men armed with at least two handguns and a rifle; there was an exchange of gunfire and two bags of money were stolen. The men escaped in a car parked behind SUB.

"It may be a while to sort everything out," said the Police spokesman.

The papers couldn't wait. Zealous, cynical (never believe official statements) reporters combed the area for witnesses or third parties who would volunteer that they thought they had heard up to seven gunshots, that they had seen a trickle of blood in the snow (which at some point became a pool of blood), that the robbers escaped in a blue, red, or rust coloured four door sedan or station wagon, that there were three, four or five men, one of whom was apparently shot in the head, and they did or did not have balaclavas covering their faces and were or were not wearing dark clothing.

All of that, with different degrees of emphasis, made it into print, and *Alberta Report*, usually the hallmark of twisted reporting, hasn't even written its version yet. All of which goes to show it does not take a special credulity to be a successful journalist, but it helps.

Peter Michalshyn

The bad life

...on the press, from the *London Spectator*.

"A demythologizing of the U.S. (and by extension thus the Canadian press) is now underway, thank God. A *Newsweek* poll reports that 61 per cent of Americans believe 'very little' or 'only some' of what they read in newspapers. Some 33 per cent apparently think reporters make stories up 'often'. With the change of mood, it wouldn't surprise me if some of the big triumphs of the past begin to unravel. Who, now, believes in the existence of 'Deep Throat'? There is, indeed, an excellent case for an investigation of the behaviour of the press throughout the Watergate spasm, the methods used to get certain stories, or 'stories', the prejudice created against Nixon administration officials before and during their trials, the actual conduct of these trials, and the extraordinary sentences imposed. From the vantage point of 1981, (after the infamous 'Janet Cook' affair, for example) the entire (Watergate) episode is beginning to look like a shameful witchhunt."

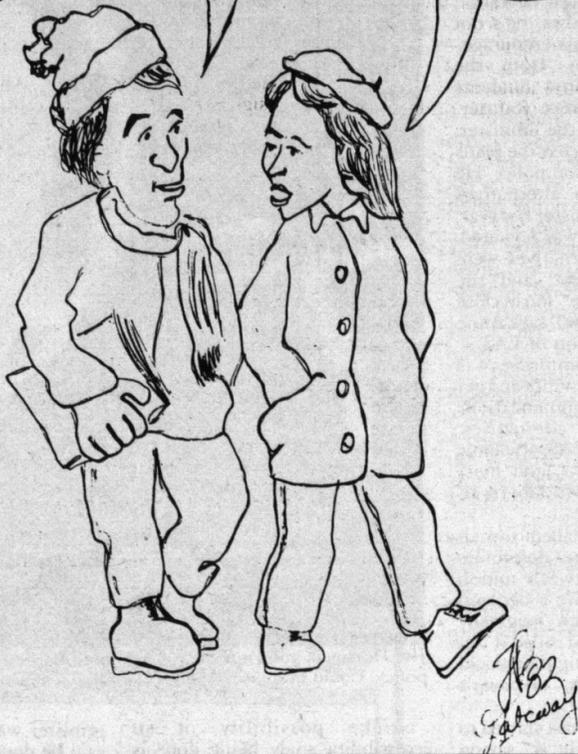
P.M.

The good life

I believed then, and still believe today, that (being a reporter) was the maddest, gladdest, damndest existence ever enjoyed by mortal youth. At a time when the respectable bourgeois youngsters of my generation were college freshmen, oppressed by simian sophomores and affronted with balderdash daily and hourly by chalky pedagogues, I was at large in a wicked seaport of half a million people, with a front seat at every public show, as free of the night as of the day, and getting earfuls and eyefuls of instruction in a hundred giddy arcana, none of them taught in schools.

H.L. Mencken
Newspaper Days

HOW DOES SCIENCE EXPLAIN ABERRANT LIFE FORMS LIKE RONALD REAGAN AND ALEXANDER HAIG? GENETIC DRIFT!



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why should anyone read this?

Dear Sir:

I confess that the *Gateway* of Thursday February fourth has left me puzzling over several perplexing questions which perhaps the Editor may answer.

Why, for instance, was the article "Return to the Land of Make Believe" published? I have no objections if the author wishes to forward an account of his weekend in Los Angeles to his mother or other close relatives. Why though, was it assumed that students in general would be interested in such maunderings?

There are parts of the article which are crude approximations of film criticism. Clearly, however, they are not intended to be such for the author himself says as much at the end of his creation, where he indicates that film and film reviews are basically insignificant matters.

If this is the case, why does he waste his own and his reader's time pretending to write about them? Why not simply cease this futility and resign oneself from the journalistic scene as rapidly as possible?

Other questions are prompted by matters in the ARTS Section. What is the source of Mr. Jackson's marvelous instinct which allows him to detect bad art without actually coming into contact with it? Isn't it perhaps the function of the critic to occasionally point out why something is bad? Why is Mr. Jackson's strategy as a reviewer to report on the state of his own viscera during the reading or viewing process rather than to actually discuss the content or

structure of the art itself? What does "self-consciously inevitable" mean, and are "comic book heroes" ordinarily this way? Can reviewers be selectively bred for instinct, and education dispensed with entirely?

Finally, some questions pertaining to the Editor's own contributions. Where does the editorial page leave off and the news begin? Is there a difference

between editorial comment and news, and if so, is the Editor aware of it? Assuming that there is a difference and he is aware of it, what is "Fight for Truth, Justice and Mom's Apple Pie?"

Does a student paper have to be this bad and self-indulgent? If so, why should anyone continue to read it?

David Samuel
Graduate Diploma in
Education I

Reviews are ironic

In Jens Andersen's dialogue in "Second Wind" (Feb. 4) he portrays himself as misunderstood, maligned and mistreated. He feels his notorious David Sereda review of December 9 is a fair and objective piece of criticism.

However, I find it hard to believe that anyone could open a

review by calling an artist a "bugger" without expecting it (and wanting it) to colour everything that follows.

If that was what Andersen considers a favourable review, I can just picture what he would consider a compliment: "You are an asshole, but you dress nicely."

Scott Rollans
Arts III

Politicians waste time

Dear Sir:

I have a complaint for the candidates in the election.

I feel that I am reasonably well informed about campus concerns and politics, however, I feel that my class time is not the time for the candidates to attempt to bridge any gaps in that knowledge. As it is, a fifty minute class is short enough for a professor to attempt to cover any subject in depth. When 10-15

minutes of that class is pre-empted by campus politicking it becomes a waste of time, both for the prof attempting to teach and for the serious students who come to class to learn.

I feel that campaigning and vote chasing should be done outside the classroom where those who wish to listen may do so and those who don't, aren't held involuntary captives.

S. Lawrenuk
Commerce I

EDITOR - Peter Michalshyn
MANAGING - Mary Ruth Olson
NEWS - Wes Oginski and Greg Harris
PRODUCTION - Robert Cook
ARTS - Jens Andersen
SPORTS - Andrew Watts
PHOTO - Ray Giguere
CUP - Richard Watts
ADVERTISING - Tom Wright
MEDIA PRODUCTIONS - Margriet Titire-West
CIRCULATION - Mike McKinney

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Staff: As we join As The *Gateway* Burns, we find Peter West on trial for trafficking Columbian which he was to sell to Jordan Peterson who then deals to Steven Walker, Murray Whitby, Ken Tsai, and Beth Jacob, who's four months pregnant. The defence lawyer, Vic Marchiel, is trying to get an acquittal on grounds of insanity, but the judge, Michael Skeet, doesn't look like he'll oblige. This is because he knows that his long-time companion, Mary-Ann Nielson, has been fooling around with Martin Beales who knows that John Roggeveen is a peeping Tom. Anne Stephen is in critical condition after Dr. Peter Jarvis slipped while performing a tonsillectomy but Kent Blinston doesn't yet know this. Neither do Tony Namath (isn't he the one with the incurable disease?), Geoffrey Jackson, Murray Whitby, and Dave Cox.